

Mr. ROBINSON: I think I stated earlier at this meeting that one of the principal results expected from the re-establishment of the Wheat Board would be in putting into the farmers' pockets the money that we believe now goes into those speculators' pockets.

Mr. JOHNSON: During the operation of the Wheat Board, did they deal directly with the Old Country firm, or did they deal directly with the merchants of Montreal?

Mr. ROBINSON: With reference to the actual detail working of the Wheat Board I think I could answer that question but I would prefer not to, because I am a friend. It is the intention of this Committee to examine Mr. Stewart and Mr. Riddell, the men who had actual control of the handling of grain. Now I think I could answer that question, but I would ask to be relieved, because I think it would be much better for the members of this Committee to get this information from the various sources, where they can rely on it as being absolutely accurate. Now they can give you first-hand information regarding the details of the handling of wheat.

Mr. FORRESTER: Is there as much money got in speculation as there is made?

Mr. ROBINSON: I could not answer that question. If you say it is a fact it may be, but we do believe that large sums of money have been gained by speculators and we do believe that.

Mr. FORRESTER: One successful man skins thousands.

Mr. ROBINSON: Possibly, and we object as representatives of the farmers to having the farmers among those thousands.

Mr. MILLER: Could the Wheat Board make any better rate across the lakes than are made at the present time by the private companies, and in your opinion, if you answer that they could would it have any effect on the amount of grain passing over Canadian channels as compared to what it is at the present time? About forty per cent I think passes through American channels. Would that be changed in any way in your opinion?

Mr. ROBINSON: That is another question I would suggest you leave for those gentlemen because it is a much more important question than appears on the face of it, and if the hon. gentleman would just agree to wait until those other men would come before you they have had experience and they could answer it in a much better way than I could. As you must remember the control of rates on the lakes is not under the Railway Board and it is a matter of negotiation as to what rate you get any time. There is really no such thing as a fixed rate for lake transportation.

Hon. Mr. ROBB: In connection with the rates and cost of handling wheat, could you tell the Committee the rates for storage that the elevators received during the period the Wheat Board was operating, and also the rates they receive to-day.

Mr. ROBINSON: At what point do you refer?

Hon. Mr. ROBB: I would like to know the rate allowed for taking in grain and storing it for the ten to fifteen-day period, and the rate you are giving to-day?

Mr. ROBINSON: The Wheat Board had nothing to do with that. That is a matter that is controlled by the Grain Commission.

Hon. Mr. ROBB: What was the rate at that time?

Mr. ROBINSON: The maximum rate at that time was 1½ cents. That included fifteen days' free storage, and then the maximum rate was ½ cent of a cent per day. I do not think what the hon. gentleman has asked is what is in his mind. There was a carrying charge allowed by the Board that would cover interest on the money invested, and insurance. I could not give you a correct answer as to that.

Hon. Mr. ROBB: Did not the Government advance the money? The elevators did not advance the money?

[Mr. James Robinson.]