

*Agricultural Products Act*

Now I shall quote from a letter dated March 23, 1948, written by Premier Garson of Manitoba, in which he says:

The wheat board as now constituted is not an agency operating primarily for the benefit and in the interests of grain producers.

I suggest the Minister of Justice should find out where he stands in relation to his colleague the Minister of Trade and Commerce, and whether he still adheres to the Tory-directed principles of the Manitoba government which would preserve the operation of the Winnipeg grain exchange and the speculative system of marketing. I believe this house and the country have a right to know where hon. gentlemen stand on these matters.

As I said, Mr. Speaker, last year I put on record a series of resolutions outlining the stand of the farm organizations of the west, particularly the one in Saskatchewan which is the largest of all. They have good reason for taking that stand, in view of what has happened through the years under speculative marketing, or what is called free and open marketing. By the way, our Tory friends favoured that at their national convention, in spite of the fact that again they tried to ride two different horses. They wanted on the one hand to put everything on the open market, at the suggestion of a delegate from Winnipeg, Mr. Thorvaldson, but were stopped in their tracks by a Tory delegate from Saskatchewan, Mr. MacPherson, who was at least a little more realistic in his approach. But they got both things before the convention.

While I am speaking on that point I should like to mention this. When I sat here and listened to the complaints of the Tory party with respect to the few control bills which have been before this house during the last few days, I was amazed, because at their national convention they said they were going to see that agriculture got its fair share of the national income. How could any government which would abrogate all controls, so that there would be no such thing as law and order in the commercial world, see that anybody got a fair share of the national income? What stupid promises to make! I wonder if they think the public are going to fall for junk of that kind.

In dealing with the question of fluctuations in the grain market I should like to call attention to the information contained in a chart

appearing in the March 17, 1949, issue of the *Manitoba Co-operator*. I wish this chart could be printed in *Hansard*, because it shows the various fluctuations and the stabilization operations that were carried on in two periods of our agricultural life when we actually had governmental control of the marketing of wheat. I am using this as an illustration, not as an attempt to bring wheat into this discussion.

**Mr. Ross (Souris):** I thought wheat was not under this bill.

**Mr. Bentley:** I am bringing it in as an illustration. The Tories may not be very much interested in this, but I like to show the public once in a while what this is all about; as someone near me says, to show up the Tories as the horrible example. In the years 1917-18 to 1919-20 we had two different governmental bodies in operation. At the start we had the board of grain supervisors, and then the first Canada wheat board. During that period we had a fairly high price level, and the fact that this price level was not sufficient to enable the farmer to buy all that he required and to liquidate his debts was not the fault of the operation of the board of grain supervisors or the wheat board. It was the fault of the government of that time, which had absolutely no control over the prices of the things the farmers had to buy. The same thing could be applied now. Since 1943 the Canadian wheat board has been dealing exclusively with wheat, and the farmer's income has reached a high level. The fact that that income has not been large enough to give the farmer sufficient purchasing power to buy the things he needs and still remain solvent, as he has a right to be, is not the fault of the wheat board. It is attributable to the fact that this government has not given the farmer the protection he requires in the various fields in which he purchases. This government is solely responsible for that condition.

I have just been informed, Mr. Speaker, that a chart such as that to which I have referred can be placed on *Hansard* with the unanimous consent of the house. It would be very difficult to read it, but it is so interesting that I am sure everyone will want to look at it. May I have the permission of the house to have it included in *Hansard*?

**Some hon. Members:** Agreed.

**Mr. Bentley:**