

judgment, when the branch line program should give the people the service that is required.

Mr. DUNNING: Will my hon. friend permit a question regarding that branch line matter? Do I understand him to advocate that the Canadian National should also be given charter rights in advance of the actual money bill passing this house? Does he mean to go back to that system with respect to the Canadian National?

Mr. GARDINER: I would prefer to see the matter handled either way; that until such time as the Canadian Pacific are ready to build they should not receive any charter rights any more than the Canadian National. You can use whichever method you like, but I would prefer the same system for the Canadian Pacific as is now used for the Canadian National, provided that system could be used effectively.

Mr. DUNNING: That is the difficulty.

Mr. GARDINER: I am going to take the rest of my time to deal with a matter of vital importance to the farmers of western Canada, namely, the question of the Canada Grain Act.

The first statement I wish to make is that while the crop of last year is the largest ever grown in western Canada, it is my humble judgment that that crop was not produced at a profit. I am not going to say that it was produced at a loss, but the margin received by the farmer was so close to the cost of production that we can say that the crop was not produced at a profit. I think I can say that the crop was probably the greatest disappointment of any crop that has been grown in the west for many years past. This was due to climatic conditions, frost, hail and so forth, and consequently we cannot blame any one in that regard. The idea, however, seems to be prevalent, particularly in eastern Canada, that the farmers this year made a tremendous amount of money out of wheat. If you go into the small towns in western Canada the merchants there will tell you very quickly that the farmers at the present time have no purchasing power and consequently they could not have made a great deal of money out of wheat. Indeed, I am satisfied they did not make any money at all and if they broke even, they were lucky.

In a year like this it is only natural that the grading system should come under review and criticism by the person who produces the commodity. This year has been no exception to the rule. I have heard more criticism

this year than I have ever heard before directed against the grading system and the farmer feels that the time has come when some better system should be evolved in regard to grading his wheat. The farmer maintains that the present system does not determine to any great extent the milling value of his product and it is on the basis of the milling value of his product that he receives a price for that commodity in the markets of the world. In view of the investigation of the agricultural committee last year into this question and the possibility of the matter arising again out of their report, I am not going to suggest any particular method or any particular change. I hope, however, that something may be done. The farmer of the west feels that just so long as the personal element enters into the question of grading his product, he will never have a satisfactory system, and I hope that ways and means will be found by the agricultural committee of bringing in a system that will be more satisfactory in determining the milling value of this particular commodity.

The greatest criticism, however, is being levelled at the present time in western Canada against the Board of Grain Commissioners and it is my purpose to deal for a few minutes with this commission. The Board of Grain Commissioners was appointed to administer the Canada Grain Act. That is its duty and function. The farmers of the west claim that the commission has not been administering the act as it should be.

Before I proceed further, let me inform the house that all the expenses of the grain commission in regard to inspection weighing and all the services which it provides, are paid for by the farmers themselves. Certain charges are levied against each car of wheat, to the extent of two dollars, I believe, and those charges cover the expenses of the grain commission and all they have to do in connection with the administration of the act. Therefore the administration of the act does not cost the people of Canada anything. Under those circumstances we say that we want a board of grain commissioners that will interpret and administer the act as the House of Commons intended it should be administered.

The greatest criticism of the Board of Grain Commissioners is with regard to what they call this "hybrid" or "high-powered" ticket for special binned grain. This ticket has been issued and forced upon farmers even though they have refused to accept it. The Board of Grain Commissioners in letters that I have seen have stated to farmers who have