

*Canadian Wheat Board*

that we are not organized is one reason why we are contributing millions of dollars every year through lower prices for our wheat. There are certainly plenty of organizations throughout the country to take care of these strays.

The hon. member for Wood Mountain also told us that he is a farmer. There are many of us who were born in hospitals, but that does not make us doctors. The fact that the hon. member has some land of his own does not make him a farmer. Perhaps he is one of these gentlemen farmers to whom I referred not long ago, who raise nothing but their hats.

In connection with freight rates, let me tell the hon. member that we in Alberta pay our just share. As far as I can learn, we pay even more than the farmers in Saskatchewan. When I ship wheat of the very best grade that can be grown I receive 70 cents, but nineteen cents of that is taken for freight and handling. This means that for the best wheat that can be grown I receive only 51 cents a bushel. I want this to be noted so that people in central and eastern Canada will not be led astray by references to this 70 cent price. It should be understood that this price is basis No. 1 northern, Fort William. Between now and the time my grain is in the bin, several things may occur to force the price down to as low as 40 cents a bushel.

Yesterday afternoon the Minister of Trade and Commerce (Mr. MacKinnon) made a statement in connection with wheat. We were thankful to get this statement even at this late date because we have been asking for such a statement for the past ten weeks. After I heard the statement I wondered why we had had to wait so long to get so little. The minister told us that this matter has engaged the constant attention of the government and its advisers, the wheat board and the board of grain commissioners. I wonder what happened to the representation and advice of the producers? As I have pointed out on other occasions, it would seem funny to other industries if their products were sold by a board which had no particular interest in that particular product. Even though our farmers are in the position they are in to-day they should not be taken advantage of because they are under this act.

I am in favour of the announcement made by the minister that farmers will be paid for storing wheat in bins on their farms. There is nothing new in this because, if I remember correctly, this was done by the wheat pools some years ago. I do not agree that the grain exchange should be left open. A few

[Mr. Fair.]

months ago we were told that the grain exchange in England had been closed. If it was good business to close it over there, why should it not be good business to close it here? The minister told us also that the 5,000 bushel limit was being removed. I always thought that was an injustice and it should never have been placed in the act. I am glad to learn that the government is rectifying that particular wrong.

The government is rectifying another wrong by setting up an advisory committee. Rather than having some straggling farmers appointed to that committee, I should like to see representatives nominated by organized agriculture. In that way the government would have the views of organized agriculture instead of those of some individual who perhaps had not been able to make good at his own business.

Reference was also made to the question of interim payments, but I believe it is too late to get interim payments this year. A great deal of pressure was brought to bear to have interim payments made this year. I think the government realizes that in the spring the farmer needs money for seed, for repairs and to meet other requirements.

The levy of 15 cents a bushel on wheat is all right as far as I am concerned, although I should like to see it higher. I hope that the price of bread is kept down and that the war-time prices board does not get any of that moonshine about which the Minister of Mines and Resources (Mr. Crerar) told us this afternoon. It is hoped that this board will keep awake to see that no undue rise in prices is put into effect. This board should also keep a watchful eye on the price of lumber and other materials needed for the building of bins, because this work will be carried on in western Canada to a considerable extent this year. If the crop reports are correct, the grain elevators will not be able to handle all the wheat.

Some reasons why we should have a good price for wheat might be given. Several reasons have been given before, but I am going to mention one or two now. It is realized, I think by everybody, that when we have a good price for wheat, all lines of industry in Canada are better off than when we have a poor price for wheat. Agriculture is one of the best markets that Canada has, and if we do not get a fair price for what we produce we are not able to buy the goods which we require and which we would buy if we had good crops and good prices.

In 1928, for example, when wheat was \$1.05 a bushel, the western provinces purchased from the east \$387,000,000 worth of goods at point of origin prices. Five years later, in