

Chairman, with all respect to the hon. gentleman who asked that question, and also to my friend who answered it, that no fair inference could be drawn from the question asked and the answer given thereto without considering certain other facts connected with the subject, and I will endeavour to bring those facts before you. Under the international agreement then in existence (it may be in existence yet) any farmers living within a certain distance of the boundary line could, if there was an elevator situated on the American side at a point nearer to his home than an elevator on the Canadian side, haul his grain over to the American side and market it. That is to say, he could haul it over there by the wagon load. If, on the other hand, an American farmer's farm was located closer to an elevator on the Canadian side than to an elevator on the American side, he could haul his grain over and sell it on the Canadian side. So far as I know, no bonded elevators exist in Saskatchewan—they may exist in Manitoba—but they do exist in the territory across the line opposite Saskatchewan. The farmers who enjoyed the privilege were very limited in number and located on a narrow strip some ten to fifteen miles wide. They could take it across the line if they saw fit. I have no doubt they did receive a higher price by the load than the advance price they would receive on the Canadian side. At the same time, there was an embargo on Canadian grain, and no Canadian grain could be shipped over the border so long as that embargo remained in existence. What happened? On the 15th December, 1919, that embargo was removed. I would like to ask this Committee if they believe for one moment that the American miller and the American grain dealer asked for the removal of that embargo in order that they might pay the Canadian farmer a higher price for the grain than they would pay for similar grain from the Wheat Board? I make this statement, that they did it because they believed they could buy grain cheaper by the load from the Canadian farmer than they could obtain similar grain through the Wheat Board. To my mind, that is a good argument in favour of the reinstatement of the Wheat Board.

I would like to emphasize what has already been said to the effect that we do not expect a Wheat Board would increase the price received for grain in the ultimate market. We do not believe that the re-establishment of the Wheat Board would increase the price of flour to the consumer one cent in any part of Canada. We do believe that it would stabilize prices. We do believe that it would prevent the throwing of large amounts of grain upon the market at a period when there were no buyers. The fact that we are compelled to market grain within three months is well known to the European buyer and also to the British buyer particularly. We are all patriotic, but we must remember that in trade the Britisher is not any more patriotic than anyone else. He wants to buy his supplies just as cheaply as he can. It is true that at the present time we have competition. A great deal has been said about that, but there is one form of competition about which I have heard nothing said, and that is the competition in selling. If the Wheat Board is re-established there will be only one buyer—

An Hon. MEMBER: You mean only one seller, do you not?

Mr. ROBINSON: I mean that at the present time if a buyer in the Old Country desires to buy his supplies at a cheaper price he remains away from the market. If the Wheat Board was in existence, that buyer would have no other source of supply. At the present time there could be competition in selling, because if one section of the farmers did not sell the other section probably would sell, and that buyer would get a supply. As a matter of fact, 75 per cent of the grain is marketed in three months and 25 per cent is marketed in the remaining nine months. I think a Wheat Board would not endeavour to rush all the grain on the market for export as quickly as the farmer was forced to deliver it. With reference to the competition in selling, supposing the farmers' companies held their supplies off the market, it might steady it for a little while, but who would benefit? They would have the grain on hand, and their competitors would sell and thereby gain any apparent advantage

[Mr. James Robinson.]