

to the farmer, because at the present time it is doubtful if you could hire more than seven or eight good marketing agents out of that appropriation of \$115,000.

I have been referring to expenses, and for the benefit of those who are not from the western provinces I hasten to make it quite clear that those expenses do not represent losses and that they do not involve any liability to the treasury or the government, because the board has been operating at a profit. I do not know exactly how far back, but at any rate ever since 1940 it has been in the happy position of distributing money on participation certificates held by the farmers. As a matter of fact, distributions in the 1940-41 crop year amounted to a little over \$26 million; in 1941-42, to \$15 million; in 1942-43 the amount rose to \$19½ million; and for 1943-44 the figures are not yet available, but I assume the amount is something like that of 1942-43. Actually a total of \$60 million has been distributed to the farmers since the operation of the Canadian wheat board; and I repeat that these figures reflect a surplus, so that actually there is no cost to the government or the treasury. All administrative and general expenses are, of course, chargeable against the proceeds of the wheat. It explains why the board has been successful, when one considers the amount of money that has been distributed. Exactly where we should bring about such a change as has been mentioned by the mover of the bill is difficult to detect. However, I still maintain that it would probably be a wise thing to go over these reports with the officials of the department and get a full story on the subject. As a matter of fact, the Canadian wheat board has not lately been before a committee, and I believe it is almost due for an airing there. I therefore strongly urge that this be done.

I wish now to refer briefly to another angle of the situation. I shall turn to the administrative aspect and the experience of the past. In this bill the board is asked to do its own marketing exclusive of existing facilities. It is probably wise to remember that the pools attempted this at one time and abandoned it later, to use the existing facilities. I am given to understand that they now use the existing marketing facilities. I went back and read the debates that took place in this house in 1932 and 1933, when the then prime minister was going to blast his way through the markets of the world. Many pertinent things were said then and there is no doubt that the failure of the venture was not due to lack of energetic enterprise on his part. However, the fact remains that even the dynamic personality of

the then prime minister did not make much of a hole in the wall of determination of the old world. I am quite sure that the country would not like a recurrence of the McFarland episode, and it is not inappropriate to be cautioned by it. I am given to understand that all grain handling companies, including the three pools and United Grain Growers Limited, use the existing facilities. Whether it is significant or not, it should at least arouse our curiosity.

When we consider the marketing situation, I submit that it would be dangerous to use the last few years as a criterion.

Everyone knows that it is a relatively easy matter at the present time to market wheat, as the minister pointed out in his statement at the time he announced the policy of the government on wheat. The European countries, nearly all of them our allies, are buying out of necessity and to a large extent on credit. Furthermore, the second world war came to an end with Canadian wheat producers in a particularly strong marketing position. Not only have the general disruption and bad weather reduced production in all areas, but the Australian and South African crop failures and a similar crop failure in the Argentine have left Canada and the United States as the only countries in the export market for wheat. This has coincided with the release of pent-up demands in liberated areas, so that there is no problem of finding markets to-day.

It is, however, very hard to say how long this situation will last. The European countries are now sowing all the wheat they can and it will take many years before they have money to pay. As I pointed out, we and the United States are now the only two wheat exporting countries in the world. It is to be hoped that the policy of the government, which is to offer wheat at a low price as compared with world prices, will encourage those countries which were not producing wheat before the thirties to revert to their original position before that time. The government assures them that we shall keep our prices around \$1.55. However, this is a mere hope and we do not know what those countries will do, whether they will leave us the job of producing wheat, or whether they will attempt to produce their own.

It is well to remember that the success of that policy outside Canada will depend in no small measure on the support it receives within the country. The government gives the assurance that it will keep the price around \$1.55, but it is seriously handicapped in the eyes of importers when political groups and various grain companies and the leader of the