

Mr. SPENCER: I should like to draw attention to the very unsatisfactory state of the moisture testing machines that are being used by the elevators to-day. These testing machines when first brought out were supposed to be a very valuable asset to the grain growers. To-day we are realizing that they are not satisfactory. You cannot get guaranteed results from them. For instance, you can take three or four samples from the same bin, have them tested by different machines and get different results in each case. I have sent three tests, one to Winnipeg, and one to Edmonton, and one to the local elevator, and got three separate results, 13.80, 14.40 and 15½ per cent moisture from wheat from the same bin. I draw attention to this because it is the farmer who has to pay for the unreliable testing machines.

Mr. MALCOLM: It is a difficult and technical problem. The testing laboratory and Doctor Birchard are working on that at the present time. I may say that I have had some personal experience in the testing of moisture in lumber, and I must admit that we had the same trouble, but we constantly improved the devices until we had them almost perfect, and I believe good work is being done now in improving these grain moisture testers.

Mr. GARDINER: I do not think the hon. member was complaining of the grain commission, but rather of the tests made by the local elevators. There is a machine on the market now for that purpose. The situation is simply this; that those machines would be fairly good if they were worked by men who knew something about the business, but the men who are doing the testing have not had the experience. The farmer who takes the grain to those elevators wants to see it tested to satisfy him in his own mind that he is getting a proper grade. The different methods of testing by the different operators bring different results with the same class of grain, consequently the farmer is very much dissatisfied. As far as those machines are concerned, I think the Board of Grain Commissioners would do well to order them thrown out of the elevators, put under a train and run over. They are causing a great deal of dissatisfaction. It would be better for the farmers to depend upon the inspection department to give them the proper test. I trust the minister will take this matter under consideration, because under present conditions the test is worse than useless. Would the minister tell me the total income from this department, the expenditure, and the surplus?

[Mr MalcolM.]

Mr. MALCOLM: The total vote for this year is \$1,504,600, or a decrease of \$275,400. The main estimates are \$1,430,000, the supplementaries \$350,000. The requirements estimated by the board are \$1,654,000. We have reduced this amount by \$150,000. We expended in the ten months of last year \$1,363,000. Of this amount, however, \$147,000 was for accounts of 1925-26 paid in 1926-27 owing to shortage of funds, leaving for 1926-27 an expenditure of \$1,216,000. We estimate the expenditure for February and March will be \$425,000, which will make the expenditure for the past year \$1,640,000.

Mr. GARDINER: What is the income?

Mr. MALCOLM: For 1925-26 it was \$1,642,054.

Mr. JELLIFF: Is there included in that item the amount paid to the Board of Grain Commissioners by the public terminals on account of overages for the crop year ending 1926?

Mr. MALCOLM: For the past year the gross surplus was \$410,832.

Mr. GARDINER: That surplus, I take it, is on the administration of the Grain Act in regard to inspection.

Mr. MALCOLM: For operation and maintenance of elevators.

Mr. EVANS: Who is in charge of the laboratory at Winnipeg?

Mr. MALCOLM: Dr. Birchard.

Mr. EVANS: Are reports published from time to time?

Mr. MALCOLM: I understand so, as he makes progress.

Mr. LUCAS: Has Doctor Birchard any help?

Mr. MALCOLM: I am sorry I cannot give my hon. friend the full staff. The temporary staff Doctor Birchard has now, which he intends to supplement, consists of a chemist in charge at \$4,600 a year, paid from civil government salaries; four assistant chemists, one miller, four helpers and one stenographer.

Mr. GARLAND (Bow River): I do not think the minister is yet convinced of the evil nature of the practice of leaving in the hands of local warehousemen moisture testing machines with power to test farmers' grain. There is no question that there is in many cases deliberate deceit on the part of those men in dealing with the grain. As a result the question of moisture-tested grain is causing