

Hon. Mr. ROBERTSON: I fear my honourable friend must have missed that particular remark, because I understand that several gentlemen who were present at that hearing recall very vividly the startling suddenness with which it dawned upon us what the gentleman said and meant. To carry that same thought a little further, what does it mean? Scores of times I have heard gentlemen engaged in agriculture in the West, state that out of the sale of a single crop they had paid for their section of land, in times of good crops. I have known the West rather intimately for over 20 years, and consequently speak with some knowledge of western conditions, though I am an eastern man. Though for perhaps 10 years a given farmer had raised enough off his section of land to pay for that land year after year. Surely no one would for a moment say that that was any reason why somebody should go in and say: "I am going to take your land and raise the crop on it next year." That is what was meant by the statement that was made, and I say that Parliament cannot lend itself to any legislation that would bring about that result.

Hon. Mr. McMEANS: Was that gentleman speaking for himself, or for the farmers at large?

Hon. Mr. ROBERTSON: He was asked why the farmers would object to the acquiring of elevators on the terms suggested by the gentlemen representing the elevator company, and that was his reply.

Hon. Mr. McMEANS: I do not think it is fair to quote, as the opinion of the whole farming community of Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta, a statement of that kind made by one man.

Hon. Mr. ROBERTSON: I distinctly said that I did not know that the farmers held that view, but I said that the gentleman representing the farmers did, and when the pool controls 125,000 farmers it is not the individual farmers who have the disposition of that grain, but it is the pool.

The honourable gentleman from Moose Jaw (Hon. Mr. Willoughby) said yesterday that any company might be put out of business if it was determined to take such a course; therefore I feel that Parliament ought to exercise care to see that no one interest takes undue and unjust advantage of another. Here is a proposal made in good faith, obviously, where the grain interests say: "We agree that our friends of the pool are at a disadvantage because they have not elevators at all the 1,717 country points. We are

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prepared to sell them an elevator at every point where they have not one. We are prepared to let them choose the elevator they would prefer at each of those points, and in fact where there are several elevators and they want more than one we are agreeable to sell them what their requirements call for." They further said that if the parties could not agree on a price that was acceptable as fair to both, they were prepared to adjust the difference by arbitration.

The carrying out of that suggestion would mean that the grain trade was assisting to put the pool in possession of elevator facilities at every country point, so that every pool farmer could send his grain through the pool country elevators to the pool terminal elevator, and then the two interests would be in direct competition with each other, neither having an advantage over the other.

But without that, by reason of the law as it stands to-day, the pool farmer, who represents 50 per cent of all the farmers in the Prairie Provinces, may bring his grain to the line elevator, and if the line elevator is full those farmers, representing half of the grain shipped from the station where there were perhaps four elevators, may put 50 per cent of the total production of grain through non-pool elevators to the exclusion of non-pool farmers, and therefore force non-pool farmers into the pool against their will. In other words, we would have what in other quarters would be called the closed-shop principle. Furthermore, sending that grain through the non-pool country elevators to the pool elevators would leave the non-pool elevators standing idle at the head of the Lakes; and I say that Parliament ought not to lend itself to assist in making possible a situation of that sort.

Parliament ought to say to both parties, who we believe, from what we have heard to-day, are practically in accord, that their differences should be adjusted on the basis of negotiations for country elevators, and of supplying the necessary equipment and space to handle the pool business. When that is done, and when the Governor in Council is satisfied that both parties are treating each other fairly, then this legislation may be brought into effect by Order in Council; but until the Government is satisfied that both parties are prepared, as we say, to play the game, neither ought to be given an advantage over the other.

I hold that to defeat this Bill would be wrong, because if the farmers' grievance is as has been stated, they would be burdened by that grievance until another Session of