

are to be taken at any value they have no confidence in the present method of handling grain and they base that lack of confidence on their experience with that system in the past.

Now, a good deal has been said this morning about what actually sets the price for grain. Some say one thing and some say another thing but I would like to meet someone who could tell me any one particular thing that does set the price which the farmer receives for the grain when he sells it. I would just like to refer to some of the methods involved—I have no quarrel with the grain exchange, I want to state that so long as business is fairly carried on under the present system, that it is a necessary institution and renders good work in the matter of regulating the trade, but I do claim that it permits certain things which in my opinion are injurious to the man who produces the grain. You may probably know that a large amount of grain grown by the western farmer is sold before the farmer seeds the grain. I had not noticed in the press that October options were being traded in November, but I feel certain that in two or three weeks it will be—and while I have not figures to show I will make the guess that under ordinary circumstances by the first day of June the amount of trade recorded in the clearing house of the great exchange will equal in bushels the entire crop that will be grown on the western prairies during this coming season. I would like to know how any man can go out and sell anything that he does not have in his control at the time of the sale. That he does not know whether the crop will grow or whether it won't grow, that he does not know a thing about it, that he will actually go out without consulting the grower the man who is mainly interested in that and sell it without any reference whatever to the man who is depending for his living on it. It may be argued, and no doubt will be, that a sale implies a purchase and vice versa and that one will balance the other in steadying the market, but it does not, which actual figures will show. I have given you figures on it and I think I shall be able to prove by those figures that it does not. For example, supposing that I wanted to have a little speculation as soon as the market opens and I had the means to put up a margin sufficient to carry a hundred thousand bushels. Supposing I made that sale at \$1.50, what do you expect my interest would be? Why, it would be to buy that grain at a lower price than I sold the option, and it might be possible that I could buy the actual grain that I had already sold at \$1.50; I might be able to buy it to fill my order at \$1.25. Who do you think would get the difference? Would I have to do anything in order to do that? No. All that I would have to do is just quietly sit down and do nothing. I have referred to the influences that are compelling the farmer to sell his grain on the market. I have made my sale possibly before his grain is cropped, and all I have to do is to keep off the market and the fact that it is being thrown in such volume in a short period in the fall will cause the price to sag. Who gets the difference? The speculator. Then the next question you might ask is who is the speculator? I suppose the first thought that would come to the farmer's mind would be the grain exchange. But that is not so. You go to any broker in the city of Winnipeg and ask him where he gets his orders from for option trades and you will get the reply perhaps, if he cares to give it. You will find that clerks in the stores, salesladies, men working on the street perhaps if they can scare up enough money to do it, men in business, farmers, yes, and even preachers and I would not be surprised that if you look in closely you would find the names of some members of parliament. Those are the speculators, those are the people that get the difference that somebody was talking about in the forenoon. They get it. As I understand it, the object of the farmers (through the Council of Agriculture) is to see if some method of handling grain cannot be devised and put into practice that will put into their pockets instead of the pockets of the speculators the entire proceeds of their grain.

There is another question that was referred to to-day. I refer to a comparison of prices under the Wheat Board with the price obtained across the line. I submit, Mr.

[Mr. James Robinson.]