

And also to the reasonable necessities of the Canadian consumer, provided that as between wheat and flour preference should be given to the exportation of flour except in cases where the public interest would be adversely affected thereby.

This broadens the ground upon which the wheat board may fix its prices for home consumption wheat and the products of wheat and makes it possible and necessary that in the fixation of these prices they must have regard as well to the interests of the consumers who depend for their food upon the millers supply, who, in turn, depends for his mill supply upon the farmer's product. The other consideration is this: that in the selling and export of the wheat and wheat products, preference must be given, unless it adversely effects the public interest,—of which they are to be the judge from time to time—to flour as against wheat. The reasons for that are obvious. In the first place, though the farmer wants to get as strong a price as he can for his wheat, he still must always bear in mind, as I think he does, that the people are to be considered as well; that in the fixation of price the interests of the consuming public as well as of the selling public should be considered. Further, it is to the advantage of this country—not only that; it is almost an absolute necessity—that as far as possible the subsidiary products of wheat milled in Canada shall be available and accessible for Canadian consumption. On that depend many widely extended interests—the dairy interests and the stock interests will occur readily to the minds of all of us. Now, during the past season the wheat board has been very much blamed—and, I think, unjustly—in that the mills have not had a greater grinding possibility, so to speak, and have not put in the export market as large a proportion of wheat flour as their industry had a capacity for, and as stock dealers and dairy men would like them to have done in order that stock and dairy foods might be at the disposal of our people. Those two interests, then,—the consuming interests and the stock and dairying interests—ought to be factors in the considerations upon which the wheat board will base its estimate and judgment with reference to prices. A good deal of criticism has been wrongfully levelled against the wheat board. My hon. friend from Kent (Mr. McCoig) is not here, but hon. members will recollect the charge that he made against the Wheat Board in respect to unsatisfactory grains.

What he said, and you will find it in Hansard, was this: That the wheat board

deliberately prevented Ontario millers from getting Ontario wheat to mill, and that consequently their mills were not employed for a longer space of time, and that consequently the stock and dairying interests of Ontario were sacrificed. And he drew a most doleful picture of the diminishing number of cattle and sheep and stock generally, which he laid to the fault of the Wheat Board in not allowing Ontario millers to get their own wheat to mill. He produced telegrams in this House from farmers in Kent asking that this wheat board project should not be put forward in legislation. I do not blame those farmers for sending those telegrams if they took as their basis the statements of the hon. member for Kent. What are the facts? The facts of the case were that Ontario raised 20,000,000 bushels of wheat last year, and that the wheat board bought less than 90,000 bushels of that 20,000,000, which would not be sufficient in the feed it would give to keep the stock of Ontario going for a single day. Yet, my hon. friend drew that doleful picture and made the criticism against the wheat board that by their arbitrary action they had made it impossible for the Ontario mills to grind their grain because the board had taken it for export and sale. It is on such statements that a good many people form their conclusions, and it is not quite right to the people that those statements should not be carefully considered before they are uttered and made public.

Mr. MORPHY: What became of the balance of the Ontario wheat?

Sir GEORGE FOSTER: It was milled and fed by the Ontario people themselves, absolutely. The other criticism was this, that the wheat board did not try, or if it did try it did not succeed in getting a larger proportion of orders in the foreign market for wheat flour. Now, I followed that matter pretty closely myself. When I was in England and Paris the matter of the future supply was up, and different states through their representatives had interviews with the ministers, and particularly with myself, as to what Canada could do to supply them with wheat. What was the whole clamour, the whole demand? It was that we should get wheat for them. Greece wanted wheat, Italy wanted wheat, France wanted wheat, Belgium wanted wheat, England wanted wheat. None of them wanted flour, and for the very obvious reason that, in the first place the wheat was more easily taken to them and at less cost, but mainly