

and committees have been appointed from time to time to try and find some better methods for marketing our grain, though it is true that a great many are under the impression that the present method, so far as its physical features are concerned, is as good as it is possible to get. During the last few months the farmers have met in convention in the cities of Brandon and Saskatoon and passed resolutions in favour of a grain inquiry.

I should like to deal with a few matters in respect to which there is a general impression that there is a grievance, particularly on the part of the producer, but first a few words in regard to the methods by which we have advanced during the last twenty years. Many sitting in this House, and on this side particularly will remember the time when the conditions under which we marketed our grain were intolerable. I need not dwell on that; I merely wish to remind the House that it was a fact. Several times during the last two decades inquiries have been made, and I can think of no instance in which a thorough inquiry was made where it was not followed by legislation that has been of very great benefit to the producers and to the country as a whole. Commissions have been appointed in the province of Saskatchewan, and after one of these had completed its work and handed in its report, legislation was adopted providing for the creation of the Co-operative Elevator Company. I should like to contrast that procedure with the experience of the Manitoba government, which tried to apply legislative measures without first holding an inquiry. The question before them both was that of the government's owning and operating country elevators. In Saskatchewan, where they took the wise course of making an inquiry and careful investigation first, they have succeeded admirably, but in Manitoba, where they proceeded to apply legislative remedies without first holding an inquiry, they failed dismally. That is so well known that I need not dwell upon it. In the year 1906 a commission was appointed and made a thorough investigation into the grain trade, and as a result of its inquiry proposed twenty-six changes. Twenty-four of these were accepted and approved and became part of the present Grain Act.

Some have asked, what results have followed these inquiries by commissions, and seem to be under the impression that an inquiry usually starts with nothing and ends with nothing. I have not time to dwell on all the improvements that have followed this particular investigation, but let me mention

only two which I think are well worthy of the consideration of the House. In the year 1907 and prior to that time, in the grain that was passing from Fort William to the transfer elevators, there was an annual loss of 50,000 bushels. That had been going on for years. The lake carriers, when asked why they did not watch the scales to see they were not beaten out of their weights simply remarked, "The more you watch the elevator people the more they take from you, and we simply take our loss and add it to the cost of carrying." The point I wish to make is this: After the remedial legislation recommended by the commission was applied, you will find if you look up the figures that after 1908 instead of there being a loss, the weights on the transfer elevators and at Fort William agreed very, very closely; in fact, there was practically no loss; and that has continued, I believe, up to the present time. I would ask if that is not a very definite and substantial benefit?—and it resulted from simply one suggestion from the grain commission.

Let me mention another. At that time it appeared as though there were abuses on the part of terminal elevators. It was very difficult to find out exactly what was taking place, but recommendations were made to remedy the abuses if they existed, and in the following year, 1909, or possibly 1910, several of the managers of the terminal elevators were prosecuted by the warehouse commission and fined \$500 each on some five or six charges. That was another practical and helpful work of legislation resulting from a recommendation by one commission only. I pass on.

Some have raised this objection, that we expect that steps will be taken to create a wheat board. I am in sympathy with that idea; in fact, I propose to urge the creation of a wheat board. But the faults of which I am going to speak nearly all existed under the wheat board of 1919, and I cannot see that they would not continue to exist under a new wheat board. What are they? The spread in the country elevator between the track price and the street price is very great. Now I would like it to be understood that the amount of grain handled in the country elevators is so small that they cannot make both ends meet—that is, the country elevators by themselves, receiving only the handling charges, are not paying propositions. And it is alleged—I will not say the allegations are all true—and our people generally believe, that a large part of this loss is made up by taking a too heavy toll from the man who is compelled to sell