

is to go to the farmers the board should have authority to pay it out, as the minister said, whether the house is in session or not, whether it be in the summer, the spring or any other season.

So this is a much more expeditious method of dealing with the matter, and one which is more practical. One must add that in the past, under the board which sat in 1935, and until 1943, it did happen that during certain years the initial price represented an amount of public money. In those circumstances there might be some justification for the view I have described. At the present time, however, no public money whatsoever is involved in these payments, and I think the giving of these powers is a practical method of doing things. May I commend the minister for having taken that step.

Without making further comment, may I refer to the third part of the measure which empowers the governor in council to extend the present system to oats and barley. Here I should like to quote the remarks of the Minister of Trade and Commerce who, I think, sets out the matter concisely. He said:

The government is prepared to take whatever steps lie within its power to assist in establishing marketing arrangements that will help to maintain economic and stable prices for Canadian agricultural products. The government must, however, be satisfied that any given scheme for this purpose is a practical one, a constitutional one, a workable one, and one that will command the support of the interested groups concerned.

I think that statement sets out clearly the intention of the government and in a concise way it answers most of the criticisms. Most of the criticism can be divided into two main parts. First, it is charged that this measure is just a political manoeuvre and that the government has no intention of enforcing or promulgating it. The other criticism is that the powers granted by this bill are so compelling that the government is thereby imposing its views upon the farmer, whether he wants it or not.

As I say, I think the minister answered the first part of this criticism when he said that the government was prepared to take whatever steps lay within its power to assist in establishing marketing arrangements that would help to maintain economic and stable prices. In connection with the other point, I think it is important to trace the history of this demand throughout western Canada.

This is not a demand which started yesterday or the day before; it is a demand which has been evident for the last thirty-five years. As a matter of fact, all governments, Liberal

and Conservative, have at one time or another had some kind of a board. We have had monopoly boards; we have had voluntary boards, and there have been periods when there were no boards at all. There is evidence throughout our history of a constant pressure by farmer organizations on provincial and federal governments to have some kind of marketing arrangement which would help to stabilize prices and conditions in Canada.

This is most important when we consider the charge that the government is trying to force something on the farmer. I think history shows clearly that the government has simply been acceding to growing demand. In 1917 we had a monopoly board. That was known as the board of grain supervisors, but in effect it was a wheat board with monopoly powers. Two years later, in 1919, we had another monopoly board. I think that board was really the origin of the Canadian wheat board. Those two boards were set up for entirely different purposes.

The next year, in 1920, there was no board. This parliament passed an act for the continuation of the 1919 board but it did not come into force. Immediately after the opening of the grain exchange in 1920, prices started to fall, and in this connection I should like to quote from the marketing service of the Department of Agriculture. The average price for 1919-20, the last year of the period when there was no open market, was \$2.59. The next year it dropped to \$1.99. In 1921 it dropped to \$1.34; in 1922, to \$1.10, and in 1923, to \$1.04.

As prices fell, there was an increasing demand for the re-establishment of a marketing board for western wheat. In 1922 this parliament again passed legislation, but that legislation required that at least two of the three western provinces should put through concurrent legislation. As we know, Alberta and Saskatchewan did pass enabling legislation, but Manitoba did not. It is interesting to note that a resolution was moved in 1922 in the Manitoba legislative assembly, and I quote from the journals of that assembly for that year as follows:

Whereas, there is general dissatisfaction with the present system of marketing grain;

And whereas, the deplorable condition of the agricultural industry in this province is such that it demands the attention of the federal government to the need of national marketing of wheat and other grains;

Therefore, be it resolved, that this legislature urge upon the dominion government the necessity of re-establishing the Canadian wheat board under the former management, with wide powers to sell wheat and other grains.

Even then the demand was for a board to handle wheat and other grains.