

Hon. DUNCAN McL. MARSHALL: Honourable senators, lest there may be some misconception on the part of those who were not in attendance at committee this morning when this Bill was discussed, I should like to make a very brief explanation.

This clause of the Bill does not permit mixing in the ordinary sense of the word: it does not permit the mixing of different grades of grain. What it does permit is the mixing of grain that may be slightly tough with grain of the same grade that is dry, in order that the tough grain may be brought up to standard by reason of some of the moisture in it being absorbed by the dry grain. As was explained before the committee, this kind of mixing has been done under the regulations of the Grain Board, and that board wanted to have further authority for it in the Act. This mixing of grain at the elevators in order to bring it up to standard has resulted in a very substantial lessening of the difference between the prices of, say, No. 1 tough and No. 1 standard. The man who had the misfortune to experience a snow-storm or a little rain when he was threshing had to suffer a reduction in price. He could not stop operations when the machinery and the workers were there. As was explained by Mr. Ross, who appeared before the committee, there used to be a margin of 8 or sometimes 10 cents a bushel. If it were proposed to permit the mixing of different grades of grain, I think every member of this House or the House of Commons would be opposed to it; but that is not what is contemplated at all. If a farmer has No. 1 grade and it is tough, he either has to pay from 4 to 5 cents a bushel to have it put through the drier or has to send it to the terminal elevator direct and take a less favourable price for it. This provision is to enable him to get a better price.

This Bill has been opposed in the Commons by two, three or four members on the general ground that no mixing of any kind should be allowed. But, as I have said, this kind of mixing has been done under regulation, and has proved beneficial to the farmer. It is not of any advantage to the elevator at all. The Grain Board is unanimous in recommending that this provision be enacted. It will not affect the marketing of Canadian wheat in the British or foreign markets to which the wheat is to go.

Hon. JOHN T. HAIG: Honourable senators, I am in favour of the amendment proposed by the honourable senator from Saskatchewan North (Hon. Mr. Horner). Mr. Ross, member of the House of Commons for Moose Jaw, said that the amendment contained in this Bill would benefit the farmers

of Northern Saskatchewan, where there is more damp grain than elsewhere. I may be pardoned for going into a little detail so that honourable gentlemen who were not present at the meeting of the committee may have some idea of what is involved. For many years the terminal elevator companies in Western Canada bought various grades of wheat, No. 1, No. 2, No. 3, and so on. The average difference in price between grades is about 2 cents a bushel. In 1927, 1928 or '29, after a long and bitter struggle, the mixing of grades was prohibited. The farmers maintained that the only people who benefited from the mixing of grades were the elevator owners; that the farmers themselves got no benefit from it, and after the grain reached the British or European market they failed to receive the bonus they were entitled to for No. 1 Hard or No. 1 Northern.

Then the question of damp grain arose. Damp grain is grain which contains, I think, more than 13 per cent moisture.

Hon. Mr. DANDURAND: 14.4 per cent.

Hon. Mr. HAIG: 14.4 per cent. If it contains between 14.4 and 17 per cent it is damp grain, and if more than 17 per cent it goes into another category. You can mix a certain percentage of damp grain with very dry grain. The grain of southern Manitoba, southern Saskatchewan and southern Alberta carries only 2, 3, 4, 5 or 6 per cent of moisture.

As I say, the farmers maintain they do not get the benefit of the mixing. In committee this morning Mr. Ross maintained that they did, because the difference in price, which used to be eight or ten cents a bushel, is now only one and a half cents. Of course, if we had a very wet year, as we had in 1912, there would be so much damp grain that it would not matter what mixing was done.

In almost every elevator in Western Canada there is a machine for testing the moisture content of grain. If Mr. Horner, or Mr. Sharpe, or anyone else brings in grain that the machine shows is going damp, he will be told of that and advised to stop threshing until dry weather comes along again. He either follows that advice or leaves the grain at home in his own granary and mixes it with his own dry grain, in which case all his grain will be dry and he will get the benefit.

I am not opposed to the mixing of damp grain with dry grain, but if this new section is passed there will be an extension of the practice and next year permission may be sought to mix No. 1 with No. 3 and No. 4. There is no demand by the farmers in Western Canada for this legislation.