

Mr. MAHARG: They are controlled, but are permitted to carry on their operations. The Wheat Board would only prevent them from taking what might be considered an excessive profit.

Mr. McMURRAY: There has always been the complaint against Government ownership, operation or control, that favouritism might occur. Was that charged against the old Wheat Board?

Mr. MAHARG: Not to my knowledge. I do not see how it could occur, because all commission companies were treated exactly the same. The commission charged is arranged by the Winnipeg Grain Exchange through their own organization.

Mr. McMURRAY: Would it be possible for the Wheat Board to show marked favouritism in connection with the elevator system?

Mr. MAHARG: I do not see how they could. The Board of Grain Commissioners for Canada fixes the handling charges and the storage charges. They are fixed by an independent Board and must apply all over. As was explained yesterday, there is a handling charge of 2½ cents. That is the maximum that can be charged. They can do it for nothing if they wish. The Wheat Board had nothing to do with that at all. That is a matter the Board of Grain Commissioners regulates. The commission charged is arranged by the grain organizations in Winnipeg.

Mr. McMURRAY: Is it not possible for the Wheat Board, having control of the flow of grain, to divert the grain to terminal elevator companies to which they are favourably inclined?

Mr. MAHARG: It might be possible, and there might be reasons for so doing, but I have not heard any complaints to the effect that that was done.

Hon. Mr. ROBB: If it were decided to establish a board to buy and sell wheat, would it be satisfactory to entrust that power to the present Board of Grain Commissioners?

Mr. MAHARG: My answer to that question is No. I do not like to say anything about the Board of Grain Commissioners, but I expressed my opinion in the House a year ago that it would not by any means satisfy the West to place the matter under the present Board of Grain Commissioners.

Hon. Mr. ROBB: Have you any opinion to offer as to what board it should be placed under?

Mr. MAHARG: We are asking for a board similar to the one which existed in 1919, with the same personnel, if possible. I cannot recommend any other board.

Mr. SUTHERLAND: I would like to ask Mr. Maharg one or two questions about some of the arguments advanced in the year 1920. You are familiar with the discussion which took place when a bill was introduced to enable the government to reconstitute the Wheat Board for that year if they saw fit to do so? At the present time I am very much concerned about the wisdom of making a temporary appointment. So far as I have been able to gather, practically all the farmers of the West are unanimously in favour of the re-establishment of the Wheat Board.

The CHAIRMAN: May I remind Mr. Sutherland that it is now one o'clock, and the committee must soon adjourn.

Mr. SUTHERLAND: My remarks will not occupy more than a couple of minutes, Mr. Chairman. I now quote from Vol. LV., No. 80, pp. 4235-4236 of Hansard for June 24, 1920, a statement made by the leader of the Progressive party, the hon. member for Marquette:—

"I think the Minister of the Interior furnished the only argument that constitutes a real reason why the board should be continued for another year, and that is, the possibility of unified buying again in Europe."

[Mr. J. A. Maharg.]