

THE FEDERAL COURT OF CANADA
TRIAL DIVISION

BETWEEN:

RON ARCHIBALD, EDWIN CAWKWELL, WILLIAM COOPER
RICK DOBRANSKI, DARREL ENGER, TIM HARVIE, MIKE JACKSON,
CONRAD JOHNSON, GORDON KELLER, WAYNE A. KRIZ, DOUG MILLER,
ART McELROY, BRIAN OLSEN, PAUL S. ORSAK, BRIAN OTTO, JAMES M.
PALLISTER, KELLY S. PATRICK, DOUGLAS ROBERTSON, GREG
ROCKAFELLOW, BUCK SPENCER, WAYNE TUCK, THE ALBERTA
BARLEY COMMISSION, and THE WESTERN BARLEY GROWERS
ASSOCIATION,

Plaintiffs

- and -

HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN

- and -

THE CANADIAN WHEAT BOARD

Defendants.

Farmers, Governments and the Canadian Wheat Board:
An Historical Perspective
1919-1987

Dr. John Herd Thompson

REGISTRY - GREFFE
FEDERAL COURT OF CANADA
COUR FÉDÉRALE DU CANADA

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Pursuant to Rule 482(6)(b), I, Sharlene Hermiston, of the City of Winnipeg, in the Province of Manitoba, Barrister and Solicitor, do hereby certify that I am satisfied that the statement of John Herd Thompson, signed August 14, 1996, and attached hereto, represents evidence that he is prepared to give in this matter:

August 14, 1996



Sharlene Hermiston
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**Farmers, Governments and the Canadian Wheat Board:
An Historical Perspective
1919-1987**

by

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**A report submitted to Brian H. Hay, Senior Counsel
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August 13, 1996

Dr. John Herd Thompson

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Introduction - The Wheat Economy and the National Policy:

Canada would not have existed without the western wheat economy. To the architects of Confederation, a prosperous prairie wheat economy was fundamental to the transcontinental vision of Canadian nationhood a mari usque ad mare ["From Sea to Sea" / "D'un océan à l'autre"]. Agricultural settlers would prevent the political absorption of the western territories into United States "manifest destiny," and the shipment of their grain to market along a Pacific railway would link the young Dominion economically. Because agricultural development was "a basis for economic and political empire" for Canada, points out economic historian V.C. Fowke, "assistance to agriculture has been consistently recognized as a function of government...."¹

The Dominion Lands Act of 1873 granted every farm family a homestead of 160 acres (65 ha) of public land. Throughout the half-century after Confederation, the federal Departments of Agriculture and of the Interior regularly intervened to develop western agriculture. Federal experimental farms popularized summer fallowing and contributed new varieties of wheat. The federal government established grain grading and inspection systems. In response to the complaints of grain growers about the monopolistic practices of private elevator companies, the federal government regulated the grain marketing system with the Manitoba Grain Act of 1900 and the Canada Grain Act of 1912.²

¹ Fowke, *Canadian Agricultural Policy: The Historical Pattern* (Toronto, 1946, 1970) 3.

² Fowke, "The Production and Marketing of Wheat," chapter IX of *Canadian Agricultural Policy*, 220-250.

The First Canadian Wheat Board, 1919-1920

The First World War extended federal participation in the wheat economy beyond promotion and regulation to actual management. In the Spring of 1917, spectacular price increases severely disrupted the open market to the point that the Winnipeg Grain Exchange requested government intervention. In June the Board of Grain Supervisors, a federal agency, assumed monopoly control of the wheat crop for the 1917-18 and 1918-19 crop years. The Board terminated trading in wheat futures on the Winnipeg Grain Exchange 1 September 1917.³ The government reopened the futures market on 21 July 1919, but shut it down a week later after a speculative surge sent prices soaring. On 31 July, PC 1589, issued under the War Measures Act, established the first Canadian Wheat Board to market the entire 1919-1920 crop. The preamble to the Order in Council argued that "...abnormal conditions, resulting in uncertainty of price and instability of market" made the Wheat Board necessary to achieve "early movement of the Canadian crop which is so essential, and...fair distribution among our wheat producers of the actual value of their product, as determined by world demand... throughout the entire season of marketing."⁴

The Wheat Board was uniquely Canadian in concept and operation. As V.C. Fovke points out, it "differed markedly in function from the United States Grain Corporation," the agency that the U.S. government set up to deal with the same international wheat situation.⁵ The U.S. Grain Corporation guaranteed American farmers a minimum price of \$2.26 a bushel, and bought wheat only when necessary to maintain that price. The Canadian Wheat Board instead paid farmers an initial payment of \$2.15 a bushel, sold the wheat crop to the best advantage, and then distributed the additional earnings to producers on a pro rata basis. This "innovative system," writes C.F. Wilson, eventually became "basic to Canadian wheat marketing policy."⁶

The first Canadian Wheat Board was a striking success. The Winnipeg Grain Exchange had predicted that it would "be impossible to secure the full value of the wheat without the open market," and that because of the Wheat Board "the farmers of western Canada will be

³ Mitchell W. Sharp, "Allied Wheat Buying in Relationship to Canadian Marketing Policy, 1914-1918," *Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science*, VI:3 (1940) 381-2.

⁴ PC 1589 printed in C.F. Wilson, *A Century of Canadian Grain*, (Saskatoon, 1976) 141-2.

⁵ V.C. Fovke, *The National Policy and the Wheat Economy* (Toronto, 1957), 172.

⁶ C.F. Wilson, *A Century of Canadian Grain*, (Saskatoon, 1976) 174.

heavy losers."⁷ But the Wheat Board, under direction of chairman James Stewart and a 10-member advisory board, made a mockery of this gloomy prognosis. Interim and final payments of 30 cents and 18 cents a bushel followed the initial payment of \$2.15, for a final total to producers of \$2.62 a bushel for their wheat, well above the U.S. guaranteed price of \$2.26.

Despite this success, the Conservative government of Arthur Meighen was ideologically committed to a return to the open market. Over protests from prairie farmers, who had been delighted by the Wheat Board's handling of the 1919-20 crop, the government reopened the Winnipeg futures market 18 August 1920 and suspended operation of the Wheat Board. The Canadian Council of Agriculture - a national federation which included the United Farmers of Alberta, the United Farmers of Manitoba, and the Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association - vigorously protested the dismantling of Board. The federal election results of December 1921 suggest prairie farmer fury at the Conservative decision to abolish the Wheat Board: Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta returned 37 Progressives, two Liberals (both from urban constituencies), and not a single Conservative.⁸ "Re-establishment of the Canadian Wheat Board," concludes V.C. Fowke, "was a more urgent matter than tariff reform for the Progressives elected in 1921."⁹

The Canadian Council of Agriculture immediately petitioned the new Liberal government of William Lyon Mackenzie King to resurrect the Canadian Wheat Board. "The Wheat Board is necessary," argued the Council,

"because it would mean a more orderly marketing [my italics] of the wheat crop.... We need the machinery that will make possible a twelve-month system of marketing our wheat production instead of a three or four-month system as it is now. Immediately after the Canadian harvest....the bulk of the farmers' wheat is thrown on the market.... [T]he period of heavy receipts of farmers' wheat in the autumn months is bound to be characterized by needless declines in prices and consequent losses to the farmer...."¹⁰

⁷ *Manitoba Free Press*, July 31, 1919.

⁸ John Herd Thompson with Allen Seager, *Canada 1922-1939: Decades of Discord* (Toronto, 1985), 14-18, 333.

⁹ Fowke, *Canadian Agricultural Policy*, 268.

¹⁰ Canadian Council of Agriculture, "Memorandum to the Dominion Government regarding the re-establishment of the Canadian Wheat Board," March 15, 1922, reprinted in Wilson, *Century of Canadian Grain*, 174-5.

Dependent on the votes of Prairie Progressive MPs to remain in power, but philosophically anti-interventionist, the King government reluctantly agreed to re-establish the Wheat Board. There was a significant difference from the first Canadian Wheat Board, however: the Prairie provincial governments had to agree to assume the responsibility for running it, and for guaranteeing the initial payments to producers. Legislation to implement the board passed in Alberta and Saskatchewan, but failed by three votes in Manitoba, even though a majority of farmer-MLAs supported it.¹¹

Unable to win a renewed national monopoly Wheat Board, in 1923 prairie producers turned to the western Wheat Pools as a half-step toward their goal of "orderly marketing" of their wheat crop. Historians are unanimous that "the pools represented a second rather than a first choice.... The growers' first choice by a considerable margin was for a governmental agency which would provide not an alternative to, but an exclusive replacement for, the open market system."¹² Producers never gave up their enthusiasm for the Wheat Board while they built the Wheat Pools during the 1920s. As R.S. Law of the United Grain Growers testified in 1935, demands for a monopoly Board "persisted even in the most successful time of pool operation."¹³

The Wheat Pools and the Open Market, 1923-1931

Prairie producers thus built three farmer-owned co-operative provincial wheat pools in 1923-24¹⁴ not because they opposed the monopoly Canadian Wheat Board, but because they had been unable to pressure the federal government to recreate it. Significantly, the wheat pools duplicated as much as possible the design and operation of the Wheat Board. The pools did not have a monopoly of the entire crop, but they were established on a contract, rather than on a purely voluntary, basis, so that participating farmers were legally required to deliver all the wheat they produced to the pools. Like the Board, the three provincial pools centralized control over all the grain delivered to them and eliminated "middlemen" by direct selling through a

¹¹ John Kendle, *John Bracken*, (Toronto, 1980) 43-5.

¹² Quotation from Fowke, *National Policy and the Wheat Economy*, 198, my italics; also 262-3; H.G. Patton, *Grain Growers' Co-operation in Western Canada* (Cambridge MA, 1928), 199-212; Wilson, *Century of Canadian Grain*, 172-3; Grace Skogstad, *The Politics of Agricultural Policy-Making in Canada* (Toronto, 1987) 40.

¹³ Law testimony before the Special Parliamentary Committee on the Canada Grain Board Act, *Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence* (Ottawa, 1935), p 83, cited Fowke, *National Policy and the Wheat Economy*, 262.

¹⁴ Alberta Co-operative Wheat Producers Ltd., Saskatchewan Co-operative Wheat Producers Ltd., and Manitoba Co-operative Wheat Producers Ltd., all provincially incorporated.

common Central Selling Agency headquartered in Winnipeg.¹⁵ The pools copied the Wheat Board system of pooling returns by grades, without regard for the time during the crop year that the grain was delivered: every grower who delivered a particular grade earned the same amount per bushel (less appropriate freight charges) no matter when he delivered his wheat. Finally, the pools adopted the Wheat Board system of initial, interim, and final payments to farmers.¹⁶

The pools were popular: by 1925-26 crop year, more than 140,000 of a possible 240,000 prairie farmers had signed contracts and the pools received more than half - 52.2% - of the prairie wheat crop. They maintained this membership, and this delivery level, throughout the rest of the decade. In propaganda campaigns to discredit the pools, the Winnipeg Grain Exchange stoutly maintained that pool returns were lower than those obtainable on the open market, although precise comparisons were in fact impossible.¹⁷ But the pools never claimed an ability to inflate world wheat prices, and had "no illusions regarding the power of an organization such as ours...to influence prices unduly," as A.J. McPhail, president of the Saskatchewan pool and a director of the Central Selling Agency, put it.¹⁸ What attracted farmers to the pools was the promise of "orderly marketing": pooling and centralized selling shielded them from inter-seasonal price fluctuations within the crop year, and earned each pool member a full average world price less minimum marketing costs.

Alarmed by the wheat pools' success, the private grain trade went beyond propaganda in its attempts to destroy them. In April, 1925, a "deliberate bear raid"¹⁹ by traders on the Winnipeg Grain Exchange attempted to drive the price of wheat below the pools' promised net payment, in order to prompt the pools' bankers to call their loans, and thus break them. The Central Selling Agency survived the raid by buying wheat futures to support the market; A.J.

¹⁵ Canadian Co-operative Wheat Producers Ltd., incorporated federally in 1924.

¹⁶ Fowke, *National Policy and the Wheat Economy*, 211-13.

¹⁷ Fowke, *National Policy and the Wheat Economy*, 245-6.

¹⁸ H.A. Innis, ed., *The Diary of Alexander James McPhail* (Toronto, 1940), 205n.

¹⁹ Fowke says that "a deliberate bear raid" was "current rumour." *National Policy and the Wheat Economy*, 228. Allan Levine writes that "charges [of a bear raid] were plausible," and that the sudden drop in prices in April 1925 "was quite possibly caused by market manipulation. But such manipulation has always been difficult, if not impossible, to prove. ...Farmers' criticisms may well have been justified." Levine, "Open Market or 'Orderly Marketing': The Winnipeg Grain Exchange and the Wheat Pools, 1923-1929," (unpublished paper to the Canadian Historical Association, (Winnipeg, 1986), 15-16.) Levine was less certain about "market manipulation" in his book, in which he concluded that it was "highly unlikely." *The Exchange: 100 Years of Trading Grain in Winnipeg* (Winnipeg, 1987), 135. Whatever the conclusion, there can be no doubt that the incident confirmed prairie farmers' suspicions about and hostility to the open market.

McPhail described this as "fight[ing] the devil with his own weapons."²⁰ The experience confirmed the belief of most prairie farmers that the open market system worked against their interests, and strengthened their conviction that, in historian Allan Levine's words, "stabilization of the wheat market would never be realized unless they had total control of the Canadian wheat crop, as the federal government had with the Wheat Board of 1919-20."²¹

In 1927 a movement for a "100 per cent compulsory Pool" began within the wheat pools. This movement sought provincial legislation that would compel all producers to deliver all their grain, not simply wheat, to the pools. This would have effectively re-established a compulsory, monopoly, grain marketing system, but a system run by the wheat pools rather than by a federal government board. Support for the plan was not unanimous, and the "100% compulsory pool" became a subject of debate within the prairie farm movement.²² Most opponents of the plan, it should be noted, were neither supporters of the open market nor opponents of a monopoly national wheat board. They wanted, as A.J. McPhail put it, to "let the pool develop as a co-op organization" and to have "Government control of non-pool wheat through a Government agency."²³ In the summer of 1930, the Saskatchewan pool conducted a referendum on the "100% compulsory pool" and found more than seventy percent in favour of it.²⁴ Responding to farmer demand, in March 1931 the provincial government of J.T.M. Anderson created a "100% compulsory pool" for Saskatchewan with the Grain Marketing Act.²⁵ The "100% compulsory pool" never operated, however. Challenged in court by opponents of the pools, the Grain Marketing Act was ruled *ultra vires* the provincial legislature.

²⁰ The Diary of Alexander James McPhail, 118.

²¹ Levine, "Open Market or 'Orderly Marketing': The Winnipeg Grain Exchange and the Wheat Pools, 1923-1929," 15-16.

²² S.W. Yates, *The Saskatchewan Wheat Pool* (1946) 137-140; Blair Fairbairn, *From Prairie Pools: The Remarkable Story of the Saskatchewan Wheat Board* (Saskatoon, 1982) 105-107; SWP cartoon appended.

²³ Diary of Alexander James McPhail, 248-9

²⁴ Citing the Sixth Annual Report of the Saskatchewan Co-operative Wheat producers, V.C. Fowke gives the results as 14,500 "yes" and 13,800 "no", for a majority of 71.4% in favour of the "100% compulsory pool." *National Policy and the Wheat Economy*, 241 n. C.F. Wilson cites no authority, and gives figures of 12,653 "yes" and 12,391 "no," for an almost identical "yes" majority of 71.5%. *A Century of Canadian Grain*, 296. No referenda were conducted in Manitoba and Alberta.

²⁵ Statutes of Saskatchewan, 21 Geo. V, c. 87.

complete control over the movement and marketing of the Canadian crop." "No other proposition will satisfy the general farming public," his farmer-constituents insisted.³⁰

Prime Minister Bennett, on the advice of J.I. McFarland, rebuffed these prairie demands for three and a half years. By the spring of 1934, however, the continued inability of the open market to function without government stabilization gradually persuaded McFarland and Bennett that a monopoly wheat board was indeed the answer. In June 1934, with the federal government the owner of more than 200 million bushels of wheat, McFarland advised Bennett that it would be "a good time to turn the whole thing over to a government monopoly."³¹ Bennett first proposed the Canadian Grain Board Act, which called for a complete and permanent federal government grain monopoly of coarse grains as well as wheat, to function like the compulsory Wheat Board of 1919-20. The bill would terminate futures trading on the Winnipeg Grain Exchange.

The private grain trade and its allies among Liberal MPs fought the bill with every means possible, and a group in the Conservative caucus opposed the compulsory Grain Board as a "step in the direction of state socialism." After extensive discussion in committee, the Canadian Wheat Board Act that received royal assent on 5 July 1935 differed substantially from the original Grain Board Act. Amendments restricted the board to wheat, suspended its monopoly powers, and allowed the futures market to survive.³² Among the important features of the original bill which were retained, however, was the provision that the Canadian Wheat Board created in 1935 was to be a permanent institution, without time limits on its operation. Summing up ten years later, T.W. Grindley, then secretary to the board, concluded that "the Canadian Wheat Board Act, 1935, was not a radical or new move in marketing method but merely a natural development from the past, of which the stabilization measures were a transition phase."³³

³⁰ Archives of the Glenbow-Alberta Institute, George Coote Papers, file 106. The quotation is from M.H. Ward to Coote, 21 June 1934. Coote received only one letter opposing a board.

³¹ McFarland to Bennett, 2 June 1934, reproduced in Wilson, *Century of Canadian Grain*, 460.

³² Thompson with Seager, *Canada 1922-1939*, 266.

³³ Grindley, "The Canadian Wheat Board, 1935-46," *Canada Year Book*, 1947.

The Voluntary, non-Monopoly Wheat Board, 1935-1943

The new Wheat Board got a late start on the 1935-1936 crop. J.I. McParland was appointed chief commissioner of a three-member board on 14 August, with a seven-person advisory committee representing millers, elevator companies, exporters, the three prairie pools and the United Grain Growers. A dual marketing system existed for the 1935-36 crop year, as the board coexisted with the private grain trade. At an initial payment of 87.5 cents a bushel, prairie farmers chose to deliver 150.7 million bushels of wheat to the board; 65.6 million bushels were sold on the open market.³⁴ The board made no additional payments on the 1935 crop. J.R. Murray replaced McParland as chief commissioner on 3 December 1935 with government orders to sell the crop rapidly, so that most of the 1935 crop was sold at prices below the initial payment.

"Fire Sale" Murray (as he was nicknamed by prairie farmers) was the choice of the King Liberal government elected in October 1935.³⁵ The government was deeply ideologically committed to laissez-faire. Trade and Commerce Minister W.D. Euler, responsible for the Wheat Board, denounced the board as "class legislation of the worst kind" which gave special privileges "to one class in one particular section of the country" - to grain growers in the prairie provinces.³⁶ The King government's plan - not openly avowed until 1938 - was to retain the Wheat Board only until Murray had sold the wheat the board already owned, abolish the board, and then to return to the open market as soon as that market showed any signs of functioning.³⁷ For the 1936-37 and 1937-38 crop years, the Liberal government effectively shut off farmer access to marketing through the Wheat Board. Initial payments in both years were set at 87.5 cents, as in 1935, but the board was ordered not to accept any wheat until the price on the open market fell below 90 cents. Prices remained above 90 cents, so that the Wheat Board acquired no new wheat to market. The government, charged W.R. Motherwell - a Liberal MP and a former Liberal minister of agriculture - had deliberately "sterilized" the Wheat Board.³⁸

³⁴ V.C. Fovks contends that "producers made substantial deliveries to the board even when its price was below the market price." *National Policy and the Wheat Economy*, 266n.

³⁵ As evidence of the board's popularity among farmers, in prairie rural constituencies during the 1935 federal election campaign, both the Liberals and the Conservatives claimed credit for having created the Wheat Board! The CCF and Social Credit also supported the Board. Wilson, *Century of Canadian Grain*, 474.

³⁶ W.D. Euler to King, 25 June 1936 quoted in Wilson, *Century*, 527.

³⁷ Wilson, *Century of Canadian Grain*, 499-502.

³⁸ M.J. Coldwell claimed years later Motherwell actually said that the cabinet had "caponized" the wheat board rather than "sterilized" it - a term more appropriate for a farmer! Canada, House of Commons, Debates, 24 March 1953, 3244.

Although prairie farm organizations continued to demand a compulsory monopoly board, they vigorously defended the voluntary board from the Liberal government's attempts to undermine it. They protested that "the western grain grower has been denied the right given to him by parliament in the Wheat Board act to deliver his grain to the board." A delegation from all three provincial pools accused the government of "repealing the wheat board legislation by making it entirely ineffective." The pools never relented in their pressure to have marketing through the Board made compulsory, and to have the futures market closed. The Saskatchewan Pool also resolved in 1936 that the Board be extended to cover oats, barley, rye and flax.³⁹

Deaf to prairie protests, the government persisted in its policy of undermining the Wheat Board. But it stopped short of outright abolition for fear of the political problems this would cause in the Prairie Provinces, where it was being challenged by the Social Credit Party and by the CCF. The government used prime minister King's favourite technique for dealing with controversial issues, the prolonged royal commission. The Royal Grain Inquiry Commission was carefully constructed to discredit government marketing of wheat. Justice W.F.R. Turgeon, selected as commissioner, was an outspoken advocate of the open market; the government, C.F. Wilson comments, "was accused of taking ample precautions to protect itself from any untoward findings."⁴⁰ In public, cabinet ministers maintained that the Wheat Board would receive a fair hearing, and that Turgeon was conducting an unbiased investigation. But notes from a cabinet meeting of 14 July 1937 suggest the government's determination to get rid of the board: "Decided to continue skeleton board.... Intention of council to abolish Board altogether when Turgeon report submitted.... Reason for continuing [the board] temporarily...to have Board in existence, pending Turgeon report."⁴¹

The government got no surprises from Turgeon's report, which faithfully reflected its previously-decided policy. Issued in May 1938, two years after the commission was appointed, the report recommended that "under...normal conditions...the Government should remain out of the grain trade, and our wheat should be marketed by means of the futures market...." Given existing market conditions, however, Turgeon reluctantly recommended that the voluntary Wheat Board be retained temporarily.⁴² Turgeon knew that his recommendations ran directly counter to

³⁹ Wilson, *Century of Canadian Grain*, 267, 518.

⁴⁰ Wilson, *Century of Canadian Grain*, 542-556. Turgeon was the only commissioner. He chose as his senior counsel J.L. Ralston, Liberal wheat critic in 1935 who had led the assault on Bennett's Grain Board Bill, and who had attempted unsuccessfully to have the Wheat Board designated as temporary rather than permanent.

⁴¹ Notes in National Archives of Canada, King Papers, cited by Wilson, *Century of Canadian Grain*, 548.

⁴² Report of the Royal Grain Commission (Ottawa, 1938), 189-90.

the explicit wishes of western farmers: "Nearly all the farmers' organizations, and...a great many of the individual farmers who appeared before me," he admitted in his report, demanded "the abolition of futures trading in Canada [and] a permanent National Wheat Board...to take over the whole of our wheat crop each year and to market it."⁴³

Western farm opinion was critical of the Turgeon report. In the words of a farmer from Hanna, Alberta, Turgeon had provided:

"...little or nothing in the way of a solution [to the problems of] the actual dirt farmer. We are to have the Grain Exchange function when times are good and make all the profit possible out of the manipulation of the toil and sweat and blood as represented by our wheat.... When things start to go bad and the Exchange fails miserably as it has always done[,] then the State has to step in in an endeavour to save the situation."⁴⁴

Circumstances in world wheat markets dictated, however, that Turgeon's report was never implemented. Instead, as Leonard Nesbitt puts it, his "recommendations were consigned to the archives where they have slumbered ever since."⁴⁵

In 1938, bumper crops in Europe and North America, the largest in world history, drove wheat prices downward and doomed the King government's hope for a return to the open market. Fearing "unrest in the West" if it failed to act,⁴⁶ the federal cabinet set the Wheat Board's initial payment at 80 cents a bushel in July 1938. Market prices fell below that level, and farmers delivered virtually the entire prairie crop to the board. George McIvor, Murray's successor as head of the Wheat Board, was ordered by the government to sell the crop - 292 million bushels - as fast as the farmers delivered it. The resulting losses cost the federal treasury \$61.5 million - more than 10% of the total federal budget of \$553 million.⁴⁷

Staggered by this sum, in 1939 the King government determined anew to dissolve the Canadian Wheat Board. The political price turned out to be higher than they were prepared to pay. Protests poured in from farm organizations, from Manitoba premier John Bracken, and

⁴³ Report of the Royal Grain Commission (Ottawa, 1938), 184-85.

⁴⁴ Archives of the Glenbow-Alberta Institute, W. Norman Smith Papers, file 12, Jack Sutherland to Smith, 10 June 1938.

⁴⁵ Leonard D. Nesbitt, *Tides in the West: A Wheat Pool Story* (Saskatoon, 1958) 257.

⁴⁶ Mackenzie King Diary, 26 July 1936.

⁴⁷ Premier Hepburn of Ontario protested to King that, through the Wheat Board, the federal government was discriminating against Ontario farmers in favour of prairie farmers. (Hepburn cited in Wilson, *Century of Canadian Grain*, 564)

from Western Liberal MPs. Not only did western farmers wish to retain the board, Liberal agriculture minister J.G. Gardiner "regretfully reported" to prime minister King: "most farm leaders would welcome a permanent government monopoly for the marketing of Canadian wheat."⁴⁸ Eliminating the Wheat Board, King wrote in his diary, "will cost us many seats in Western Canada. ...It will be a sort of suicide to proceed with it."⁴⁹ The government backed down. An amendment to the Wheat Board Act restricted deliveries to the board - farmers were not permitted to deliver more than 5000 bushels in any one crop year - but the Wheat Board remained. "The Government," concludes D.A. MacGibbon:

"had tried to get out of the wheat business and failed....Canadian wheat growers were determined that the Government should maintain the Board.... With the capitulation of the Government to this point of view it was no longer possible to regard the Canadian Wheat Board as a temporary agency established to meet a single emergency, but as a permanent part of the institutional machinery of Canada for dealing with wheat marketing...."⁵⁰

J.G. Gardiner's alternate strategy for bypassing the Wheat Board also failed. The Wheat Co-operative Marketing Act of 1939 attempted to reinvigorate producers' pooling, dormant since 1931, by guaranteeing initial payments made by co-operative wheat marketing associations. This gave wheat farmers three marketing options for the 1939 crop: pooling, the Wheat Board, or the open market. Although prices fluctuated above and below the 70 cent initial Wheat Board payment set by the government, farmers overwhelmingly delivered to the board, which received 82 percent of the grain marketed. The three provincial pools ignored the Wheat Co-operative Marketing Act, so that co-ops marketed less than one percent of the crop. The rest of the crop was sold on the open market.⁵¹

World War Two demonstrated the Wheat Board's indispensability to Canadian grain marketing policy, and its responsibilities proliferated. The Wheat Board's primary responsibility, selling wheat, continued; the board made bulk sales directly to British government purchasing agencies. The Wartime Prices and Trade Board used the Wheat Board to implement price provisions for feed grains. In October 1942, the board assumed control of allocation of

⁴⁸ Gardiner cited in H. Blair Neatby, *William Lyon Mackenzie King: The Prism of Unity, 1932-1939*, (Toronto, 1976) 305-8.

⁴⁹ Gardiner cited in H. Blair Neatby, *William Lyon Mackenzie King: The Prism of Unity, 1932-1939*, (Toronto, 1976) 305-8.

⁵⁰ D.A. MacGibbon, *The Canadian Grain Trade 1931-1951* (Toronto, 1952), p 47, my italics.

⁵¹ George Britnell, "Dominion Legislation Affecting Western Agriculture, 1939" *Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science*, 6:2 (1940), 276-77.

railway cars to country elevators for wheat and coarse grains. In April 1943, the fats and oil administrator conscripted the board to accept delivery of the expanding sunflower and rapeseed crops.

For wheat, the 1930s problem of massive annual carryovers persisted for the first three war years. German conquest of some Canada's important wheat customers, combined with huge wheat crops in 1939 and 1940, created a wartime wheat surplus twice the size of that ten years earlier. In August 1940, with the support of organized producers,⁵² the government amended the Wheat Board to implement Canada's first delivery quotas through the Wheat Board, not only for wheat, but for oats and barley.⁵³ The Wheat Board, C.F. Wilson points out, made possible "a delivery control system which was a Canadian alternative to the American method of acreage control."⁵⁴

The government made these changes in the operation of the Wheat Board in close consultation with, and with the approval of, organized grain farmers. In 1940, the wheat board advisory committee, suspended in December 1935, was reinstated and regularly referred to in policy discussions. Beginning in January, 1941, the federal cabinet also met periodically with the Canadian Federation of Agriculture, which had broad western representation.

By 1943, eight years experience had demonstrated the problems created when a non-monopoly wheat board co-existed with an open market. Such a dual marketing system produced two possible scenarios, each unacceptable from the federal government's perspective. When the voluntary wheat board set an initial payment which turned out to be above a weak market, as in 1938-39, the board received virtually all the wheat delivered, and the federal treasury had to make up the difference between the initial payment and the board's eventual selling price. If the initial payment were low relative to the open market price, farmers would deliver virtually all their grain to the private trade, and the wheat board would be left without wheat to sell.⁵⁵

This second situation threatened in the summer of 1943. Crop failures in the United States pushed wheat prices more than 30 cents above the board's 90-cent initial payment, and

⁵² The pools first advocated a delivery quota system, in combination with a compulsory monopoly Wheat Board, in 1934. They repeated both demands in 1940. See Wilson, *Century of Canadian Grain*, 653, 651.

⁵³ Ian MacPherson and John Hurd Thompson, "An Orderly Reconstruction: Prairie Agriculture in World War Two," *Canadian Papers in Rural History*, IV, (1964) 13-14.

⁵⁴ Wilson, *Century*, 687.

⁵⁵ A third scenario, an initial payment close to the market, was also unacceptable. In these circumstances, the board was uncertain how much wheat would be delivered to it, and thus unable to make bulk sales based on future holdings. Such uncertainty became particularly problematic during wartime.

farmers delivered to the private trade. To assure the board adequate supplies to meet commitments to Britain and for Mutual Aid to other allies, on September 27, 1943 the federal government fixed the price of wheat at \$1.25 a bushel and terminated futures trading on the Winnipeg Grain Exchange. Thereafter "the Canadian Wheat Board," writes Mitchell Sharp, "became, as the prairie pool organizations had always advocated, the sole marketing agency for western wheat."⁵⁶

The government made the decision confident of the support of farm organizations, but the government had not made the decision because farm organizations advocated a monopoly wheat board. The pools nevertheless hailed the move as "a complete vindication of the attitude of the organized farmers," and the Canadian Federation of Agriculture similarly voted its approval.⁵⁷ The Manitoba and Alberta pools both complained that the decision should have been taken earlier. Farmer's organizations also noted that the wheat board monopoly was not yet permanent: the order in council had set an expiry date of July 31, 1945.

The Canadian Wheat Board Consolidated and Expanded, 1944-1950

Unlike the decision in September 1943, the federal government paid close attention to the opinions of prairie farmers when it decided to continue the Wheat Board monopoly after the war ended. Political survival dictated listening to what organized farmers had to say about wheat policy. Mackenzie King's Liberal government was re-elected in June 1945, but prairie constituencies returned only fourteen Liberals. The twenty-three CCFers and thirteen Social Credit candidates elected by prairie voters were pledged to support a compulsory monopoly Wheat Board. Minister of Agriculture J.G. Gardiner, one of only two Liberals elected in Saskatchewan, defeated his CCF opponent only on a recount. C.F. Wilson suggests that Gardiner understood "the need of doing something spectacular on behalf of producers in order to regain his popularity," and nothing was more generally popular with prairie farmers than the monopoly wheat board.⁵⁸ The pools and the Western Farm Conference, the western section of the Canadian Council of Agriculture, continued to declare their desire that "the Canadian Wheat Board be continued as the sole marketing agency for wheat."⁵⁹

⁵⁶ Mitchell Sharp, *Which Reminds Me* (Toronto, 1994), 28.

⁵⁷ Cited in Fairbairn, *From Prairie Roots*, 151.

⁵⁸ Wilson, *Century of Canadian Grain*, 1047.

⁵⁹ Wilson describes eight resolutions from farm organizations in favour of a monopoly board between 1945 and 1948. Cf *Century of Canadian Grain*, 809, 811, 868, 923, 925, 963, 973.

There was more to the government's decision to continue the Wheat Board monopoly than simple political expediency, however. Both grain growers and the government feared that the end of the war would bring a return to the wheat surpluses and the depressed prices of 1929 to 1942. The resultant desire for longer-term security of markets and prices motivated a four-year wheat purchasing agreement with Britain. Canada promised to provide 160 million bushels to Britain in 1946 and again in 1947, and 140 million bushels yearly in 1948 and 1949. The Wheat Board was indispensable to this bulk trading agreement with Britain, and the only way to guarantee that the board would have the wheat to honour the agreement was to continue its monopoly.

Because of "the terms of the United Kingdom-Canada wheat contract," Minister of Trade and Commerce James MacKinnon announced to the House of Commons:

"the government considers it wise and advisable to continue the Canadian Wheat Board as the sole purchaser of western Canadian wheat from the producers. The government believes that the great majority of western producers are satisfied, for the present at least, with this method of marketing."⁶⁰

For the first two post-war years, cabinet used the authority of the National Emergency Transitional Powers Act to continue the board's monopoly. In 1947, the government amended the Canadian Wheat Board Act to extend the board's monopoly until August 1950. Debate on the bill revealed widespread parliamentary support from the extension from both sides of the house. CCPers were, of course, delighted. They complained that the monopoly had not been made permanent. Robert Fair, Social Credit member for Battle River, Alberta, moved that the Winnipeg Grain Exchange be abolished. Several Progressive Conservatives opposed the board's monopoly, but supported the idea of a voluntary board. The bill passed third reading 172 to seven. None of the seven nays represented a prairie constituency.⁶¹

The 1947 amendment to the act also permitted "the board, with the special approval of the governor in council [the cabinet] to deal in grains other than wheat."⁶² This addition was the government's response to persistent pressure from organized producers to place all grains, not simply wheat, under the control of a monopoly board. This demand had begun in the 1920s, when the campaign for a "100% compulsory pool" had targeted all grain crops. The prairie pools had supported board control of all grains throughout the 1930s, and R.B. Bennett's original 1935 legislation had called for a grain board rather than a board exclusively for wheat.

⁶⁰ Canada, House of Commons, Debates, 30 July 1946, 4036. My emphasis.

⁶¹ Canada, House of Commons, Debates, 1947, 608-33, 742-61, 766-810, 813-928, 1362-63.

⁶² Canada, House of Commons, Debates, 18 February 1947, 575.

After World War Two, the Canadian Federation of Agriculture joined the pools in this demand that the Wheat Board market coarse grains. In a meeting with the federal cabinet in February 1947, the federation expressed "confidence in the operations of the Canadian Wheat Board," commended the continuation of the Wheat Board's monopoly, and recommended "that the board be made the sole marketing agency for all commercial grains grown in the provinces of Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta."⁶³ Prairie farmers were so unanimous in their support for board control of all grains, Western cabinet ministers told Mackenzie King, that "if this were not done, the [Liberal] party would lose the West entirely. The CCF would sweep everything."⁶⁴

The government moved cautiously on the implementation of this recommendation about grains other than wheat, however, because it was on uncertain constitutional ground. Because most wheat was exported, it fell clearly within the power to regulate interprovincial commerce assigned to the federal government by the British North America Act. Oats and barley were largely traded intraprovincially, and thus under provincial jurisdiction. Minister of Trade and Commerce C.D. Howe explained the situation to Parliament in February 1948:

"Strong representations favouring the marketing of oats and barley through the wheat board have been received from farm organizations.... The government desires to meet the wishes of farm organizations in this regard.... [But] a scheme that would work for oats and barley would not be constitutional, and a constitutional scheme would not work."⁶⁵

The government's solution was to seek conjoint legislation establishing Wheat Board control of coarse grains from the provincial governments of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta. As indirect evidence of the popularity of the measure, all three provinces did so: the Wheat Board accordingly took control of oats and barley in the 1949 crop year. Further evidence that prairie farmers overwhelmingly supported the extension of the board's authority over oats and barley came in February 1951, when the Manitoba government held a producer plebiscite on Wheat Board monopoly handling of coarse grains. Fewer than 3,846 farmers supported the open market; 31,052 - 89 percent - voted in favour of the monopoly Wheat Board system.⁶⁶

⁶³ Canadian Federation of Agriculture, *Farmers Meet the Cabinet*, cited in Wilson, *Century of Canadian Grain*, 923. One member organization, the United Grain Growers, supported the board monopoly of wheat marketing but dissented from the recommendation that the board have a monopoly of all grains.

⁶⁴ Mackenzie King Diary, 13 February 1948.

⁶⁵ Canada, House of Commons, *Debates*, 27 February 1948, 1677-78.

⁶⁶ Results in C.F. Wilson, *Century of Canadian Grain*, 976-7.

This affirmation of support for the monopoly Wheat Board came despite a massive effort by the private grain trade to extol the merits of the open market system. Grain Exchange historian Allan Levine describes the flood of radio, pamphlet and newspaper advertisements as "one of the largest public relations campaigns in western Canadian history."⁶⁷ The *Winnipeg Free Press*, the largest circulation daily newspaper in the Prairie Provinces, also consistently condemned the board. "The wheat producer," noted a contemporary observer "remained singularly unimpressed."⁶⁸

Building a Permanent Wheat Board, 1950-1967

Nor was the federal government impressed by the private grain trade's arguments in favour of a return to the open market. Between 1943 and 1949, the government had reversed its pre-war wheat policy, and abandoned the notion that the Wheat Board was a temporary solution to deal with an emergency situation. By 1950, the government understood that a monopoly Wheat Board was a necessary element of Canadian agricultural policy. Three reasons explain this profound change of policy.

The first reason was international. The post-war international community had changed, and Canada played a larger role in it. "The creation of a compulsory Wheat Board," writes Mitchell Sharp, facilitated this role "by providing a workable mechanism for Canadian participation."⁶⁹ Government to government sales became the international norm. Trade and commerce minister C.D. Howe explained to parliament that during the 1949-50 crop year "eighty-five percent of...wheat sales have been initiated by government agencies in the importing countries with the Canadian wheat board." Because "a majority of our customers prefer to settle their grain problems with an official agency," Howe concluded, "it is obvious that we should maintain the wheat board to deal with them in that way."⁷⁰

Second, prairie producers overwhelmingly supported the compulsory monopoly wheat board. By the 1950s, the persistent campaigns of prairie farm organizations for "orderly marketing" had created, in V.C. Fowke's words, "a willingness to interfere in agricultural markets in order to mitigate the worst effects of unbridled competition among agricultural

⁶⁷ Levine, *The Exchange*, 207.

⁶⁸ Fowke, *National Policy and the Wheat Economy*, 276.

⁶⁹ Sharp, *Which Reminds Me*, 29.

⁷⁰ Canada, House of Commons, *Debates*, 20 April 1950, 1732-33.

producers."⁷¹ As C.D. Howe put it, the wheat board system ensured "dependable trading," and was "an insurance policy...against instability."⁷²

Finally, the multiple wartime and post-war successes of the board under chairman George McIvor had repeatedly demonstrated its efficacy: simply put, the compulsory monopoly Wheat Board worked as the exclusive marketing agent for Canadian grain. The individual conversions of three policy-makers from opponents to supporters of a monopoly wheat board are illustrative of the governmental about-face.

Minister of Agriculture J.G. Gardiner transformed himself from an apostle of the open market to cabinet's most outspoken Wheat Board advocate because of the unwavering support prairie farmers, through the wheat pools, showed for the board.⁷³ "These organizations have the active support of more than half the wheat farmers in the Prairie Provinces," Gardiner told his cabinet colleagues in 1950, "and their views are agreed with by at least 75% of the farmers."⁷⁴ Experience had also taught Gardiner that a dual marketing system with a voluntary board and the open market didn't work. Reflecting back from the perspective of fifteen years operation, Gardiner described the 1935 Canadian Wheat Board Act as "a triumph for the advocates of a continuance of the speculative method of trading in wheat." With an optional board, he had learned, the "[grain] trade received profits - government took losses."

Mitchell Sharp had worked in the private grain trade in Winnipeg before he came to Ottawa to help shape wheat policy in the departments of finance and trade and commerce. Sharp came to support a compulsory wheat board because of its international usefulness. Canada's competitors on the international market subsidized their farmers; without a wheat board, "western producers would otherwise have been left alone and unprotected in meeting government-supported competition from exporters like the United States."⁷⁵

The most dramatic individual example of a former non-believer who became a Wheat Board advocate is C.D. Howe, Liberal Minister of Trade and Commerce responsible for the Board from 1948 until 1957. Howe accepted the board for the most pragmatic of reasons: Chief

⁷¹ Fowke, *National Policy and the Wheat Economy*, 276-7, 295-6.

⁷² Canada, House of Commons, *Debates*, 20 April 1950, 1731.

⁷³ Norman Ward and David Smith, *Jimmy Gardiner: Relentless Liberal* (Toronto, 1990), 188-89, 333.

⁷⁴ Gardiner, "A History of the Wheat Position," Cabinet Document 44-51, 11 October 1950, reproduced as Appendix 6 of Wilson, *Century of Canadian Grain*, 1092-1102.

⁷⁵ Sharp, *Which Reminds Me*, 29.

Commissioner George McIvor proved to him that it worked. In 1948, when Howe sponsored the extension of Wheat Board control over feed grains, he privately opposed the legislation. Howe unsuccessfully proposed "his own private enterprise schemes" as alternatives. After several years of successful Wheat Board marketing of coarse grains, Howe admitted to McIvor that he had been mistaken. "You know George," he told McIvor over a whisky, "that damn scheme of mine would never have worked."⁷⁶ In 1953, Howe told parliament that "it has been most fortunate for the farmer and for the country...that the wheat board has had such complete control of the western crops of wheat, oats and barley."⁷⁷

Prairie farmers didn't have to be converted: they continued to enthusiastically support the monopoly Wheat Board. "An overwhelming majority of farmers in western Canada are solidly behind the wheat board," maintained an Alberta MP; "moreover we believe that the permit book and quota system is the fairest way of handling deliveries in western Canada."⁷⁸ The board acquired, argues, political scientist David E. Smith a status "equivalent to a farmers' *Magna Charta* (sic)":

"The Board's strength lay in its popularity. The peaks and troughs of the futures market were replaced by the assurance of an initial payment based on projected sales and a final payment calculated on the pooling of returns from actual sales. The Board thus became a steward of producers' interest and the fervour with which the vast majority of farmers defended it revealed how great was the need it satisfied."⁷⁹

During the mid-1950s, the Wheat Board enabled Canada to withstand a massive subsidized export program carried out by the United States under U.S. Public Law 480.⁸⁰ The board played a critical role in the quiet wheat diplomacy with the United States with regard to the disruptive effects of subsidies to exports. During the 1960s, historian Dan Morgan argues, the Wheat Board helped Canada to respond to U.S. attempts to "grab markets away from Canada and other competitors."⁸¹

⁷⁶ Robert Bothwell & William Kilbourn, *C.D. Howe: A Biography* (Toronto, 1979), 231-2, 276-7.

⁷⁷ Canada, House of Commons, *Debates*, 30 March 1953, 3416.

⁷⁸ Victor Quelch, *Social Credit, Acadia* (AB), Canada, House of Commons, *Debates*, 30 May 1950, 3015.

⁷⁹ David Smith, *The Regional Decline of a National Party: Liberals on the Prairies* (Toronto, 1981) 24-27.

⁸⁰ *Report of the Canadian Wheat Board, Crop Year 1956-57* (Ottawa, 1957), 7-8.

⁸¹ Dan Morgan, *Merchants of Grain* (New York, 1980) 173-5.

In addition to preserving traditional customers, the board found new ones. The large sales to the Peoples' Republic of China which began in 1961, said Conservative cabinet minister Gordon Churchill, were made because "the wheat board with its usual alertness and activity had kept closely in touch with the situation in China."⁴² Liberal minister Mitchell Sharp credits William McNamara, George Melvor's successor as Chief Commissioner of the Wheat Board, with making the Soviet Union a customer for Canadian wheat in 1963.⁴³ By 1964, the board had negotiated long-term sales agreements with six Soviet-bloc countries as well as with China.⁴⁴

The Wheat Board's success and consequent popularity were reflected in the debates when its monopoly was renewed by parliament in 1950, 1953, 1957, and 1962. The Liberal government of Louis St. Laurent sponsored the first three of these extensions, and the Conservative government of John Diefenbaker the fourth. Not a single MP voted against the extension of the compulsory monopoly board on any of these four occasions.⁴⁵ During the debates on the extensions, opposition members might suggest specific changes in the Wheat Board's operation⁴⁶, but any problems were invariably blamed on the government of the day, rather than board itself.⁴⁷ Individual prairie MPs vied to outdo each other to prove their enthusiasm for the board as the sole marketing agency for the western wheat crop, and to claim that their party - Liberal, Conservative, CCF, or Social Credit - had contributed the most to create the board.

During each of these debates on the extension of the board's monopoly, opposition members suggested that the monopoly be made permanent, and thus not subject to periodic renewal. In 1950 Victor Quelch, the Social Credit MP for Acadia [AB], spoke passionately for a permanent monopoly for the Wheat Board:

"...it is in the interests of the people of Canada, and more especially in the interests of the grain growers, that the wheat board continue to operate as a hundred per cent marketing agency.... [I]f the day should come when we make

⁴² Canada, House of Commons, Debates, 27 March 1962, 2216-17.

⁴³ Sharp, *Which Reminds Me....* 122-23.

⁴⁴ Report of the Canadian Wheat Board, Crop Year 1963-64 (Ottawa, 1964), 13.

⁴⁵ Canada, House of Commons, Debates: 1950, 3229; 1953, 3426; 1957, 1152; 1962, 2220.

⁴⁶ The most frequent suggestion was that the government increase producer representation by increasing the power and size of the advisory board.

⁴⁷ As an example, in 1966, when Alvin Hamilton criticized Liberal trade and commerce minister Mitchell Sharp on box car availability, he accused the government of a "crime against western farmers and the wheat board." Canada, House of Commons, Debates, 1 March 1966, 1954, emphasis added.

the selling of wheat optional, and permit the decision whether it be sold to the wheat board or on the open market, we shall have signed the death warrant of the wheat board."⁸⁸

As testimony to the broad, non-partisan parliamentary support for the monopoly board, the suggestions that it be made permanent came from MPs from four different political parties: Quelch in 1950; Robert Fair, Social Credit MP for Battle River [AB], in 1953; M.J. Coldwell, CCF member for Rosetown-Biggar [SK] in 1957; and Hazen Argue, Liberal MP for Assiniboia [SK], in 1962. During the 1957 debate, Conservative opposition leader John Diefenbaker spoke in favour of Coldwell's amendment that the board monopoly be made permanent.⁸⁹

The government members who resisted these motions were always careful to place on the record their personal and their party's support for the monopoly board. Responding to Coldwell and Diefenbaker in 1957, Liberal MP Ross Thatcher, Moose Jaw-Lake Centre [SK], said that he agreed with the "99 percent of the farmers in the west today [who] support the wheat board. But...it is sensible to have the matter reviewed in five years." Eldon Woolliams, Conservative MP for Bow River [AB] rebutted Hazen Argue with a history lesson in 1962. "The farmers of Alberta...know that it was R.B. Bennett who created the Canadian wheat board.... The Conservative party has always stood solidly behind the wheat board. We created it, and we believe it is a good marketing institution."⁹⁰

In 1967, the Liberal government of prime minister L.B. Pearson amended the Canadian Wheat Board Act to make the monopoly powers of the board permanent. Parliamentary support was universal. In keeping with the late 1960s zeitgeist, the parliamentary debate became almost a "love-in." The Conservative, NDP, and *Créditiste* MPs who spoke on the bill were fulsome in their praise. "I do not think there can be any objection," said Warner Jorgenson, Conservative member for Provencher [MB]; "the members of the board...are not only competent but are one of the finest groups of public servants to be found almost anywhere." Stanley Knowles, NDP member for Winnipeg North Centre, described the Wheat Board Act as "one of the most successful pieces of legislation that the parliament of Canada has passed." C.-A. Gauthier, *Créditiste* member for Roberval [Qc], asked that similar marketing boards be created for farmers in other regions of Canada, "so that eastern farmers could enjoy the same benefits and...keep in step with the western provinces...." Only opposition leader John Diefenbaker was unable to resist a barbed observation: "Many who opposed the wheat board as being a dangerous intrusion into private business," he intoned, "have today become worshippers of the wheat board."⁹¹

⁸⁸ Canada, House of Commons, Debates, 30 May 1950, 3015.

⁸⁹ Canada, House of Commons, Debates: 1953, 2425; 1957, 1125-32; 1962, 257-58.

⁹⁰ Canada, House of Commons, Debates: 1957, 1129; 1962, 2210-11.

⁹¹ Canada, House of Commons, Debates, 25 May 1967, 574-91, 1260-70.

The Canadian Wheat Board since 1967

Such universal approval of the Canadian Wheat Board by policy makers and producers could not be sustained. Although it remained an autonomous crown agency, by the 1970s some farmers viewed the Wheat Board as part of a larger complex of federal agricultural policies that were not always popular. Sometimes the Board suffered by association with federal policies that the commissioners had actually opposed, like the 1970 LIFT (Lower Inventories For Tomorrow) program, in which the federal government paid farmers not to grow wheat.⁹² The Wheat Board's role in organizing grain transportation also came under criticism, as Canada's grain handling facilities aged and wore out.⁹³

The complications of a federal agricultural policy designed for regions other than the Prairies further undermined the Canadian Wheat Board. In 1974, the government removed domestic feed grains from Board control at the request of eastern livestock producers, not because western farmers wanted the change. Prairie provincial governments criticized this action as detrimental to the Wheat Board's ability to ensure "orderly marketing" and "price stability," and thus to protect the "family farm."⁹⁴ Beginning in the 1974-75 crop year, the decision complicated the Wheat Board's operations because it had to "operate two diverse systems in tandem...which may not be compatible."⁹⁵

Farmers of the 1970s felt less threatened by the private grain trade than their predecessors. The opening of the feed grains market attracted to western Canada two U.S. based members of the multi-national private grain trading oligopoly, Cargill and Continental, to compete with the wheat pools in the elevator business. An exponential expansion of rapeseed acreage created a large crop which was sold to the private grain trade. In 1973, a hotly-contested producer plebiscite determined rapeseed's marketing future. Allan Levine estimates that the pools spent \$60,000 to persuade farmers to choose the board, while the Winnipeg Commodity Exchange (as the Winnipeg Grain Exchange had renamed itself in 1972) spent \$100,000 propagandizing for the open market. Producers chose the latter by a majority of 52.7 per cent.⁹⁶

⁹² Smith, *Liberals on the Prairies*, 97.

⁹³ Barry Wilson, *Beyond the Harvest: Canadian Grain at the Crossroads* (Saskatoon, 1981) 188, 192-3.

⁹⁴ Smith, *Regional Decline of a National Party*, 101.

⁹⁵ Fairbairn, *From Prairie Roots*, 215.

⁹⁶ Levine, *The Exchange*, 225-6.

Specific commodity groups appeared during the 1970s which were critical of the Board, notably the Palliser Wheat Growers' Association, later renamed the Western Canadian Wheat Growers Association. Most Prairie farmers remained strong advocates of a monopoly Wheat Board, however. In January 1976, on the CBC's "Country Canada" Ted Turner, president of the Saskatchewan Pool, eloquently defended the monopoly Wheat Board against the attacks of Ivan Macmillan of the PWGA. To Macmillan's charge that the Board was not accountable to Prairie farmers, Turner pointed out that, unlike the private grain trade, the Board had an elected advisory committee and reported to Parliament. To the suggestion that the Board needed "competition," Turner riposted that it had competition: other grain-exporting countries!⁹⁷

Canada's competitors for export markets provided external confirmation that the Canadian Wheat Board was marketing Canada's grain aggressively. They consistently argued that the Board was an unfair trade tactic, and paid it the honour of demanding that it be abolished. The Board's "stellar performance" in increasing Canada's market share from 18 to 22 per cent in 1976-7, wrote journalist James Rusk, "has some Yankee grain traders crying in their beer."⁹⁸ A decade later, both the U.S. National Association of Wheat Growers and the EEC made the same complaint that the Canadian Wheat Board gave prairie farmers an unfair trading advantage.⁹⁹

Wheat Board opponents and supporters debated the relative returns to U.S. and Canadian farmers from the U.S. open market and the Canadian orderly marketing systems. In his study *Merchants of Grain*, Dan Morgan concluded that conclusions were impossible; what Morgan did find was:

"big differences in the mood and pace of life on the two sides of the Canadian-American prairie border.... Several in-town elevators buy grain in Rolla (ND), but they offer almost identical prices. These change rapidly, even crazily, in response to fluctuations in Chicago.... Wheat prices changed as much as 30 cents a bushel in an hour or two. It was agricultural roulette....

Just a few miles away in Canada, the mood and tempo could not have been more different... The Canadian farmers who gathered in the office of their in-town elevators to gossip and klatsch were relaxed. They seemed in much less of a hurry than people just across the border... [Selling grain] was the Wheat Board's problem, not theirs. At least in the parts of the Canadian prairies I visited, the

⁹⁷ "Terminal Illness", CBC Country Canada, 2, 9, 16 January 1976.

⁹⁸ James Rusk, "Canada should think twice before signing pact with U.S.," *Free Press Report on Farming*, Aug 17 1977, 2.

⁹⁹ Oliver Bertin, "U.S. farmers becoming more aggressive on wheat exports," *Globe&Mail*, 25 January 1988, B3; John Kohut, "The two-faced world of the farm trade," *Globe&Mail*, 5 September 1987.

Wheat Board was popular - a seemingly permanent institution that is working well.¹⁰⁰

When journalist Carol Giangrande toured rural Canada in 1985 to interview farm families for her book *Down to Earth: The Crisis in Canadian Farming*, she found rural economic conditions and farmer morale best in the grain economy of the Prairie West. She attributed much of this to the Wheat Board:

"While farmers know they can't control the fluctuations of the world grain market, almost all of them are satisfied with the Wheat Board's performance as a sales agent for their grain. While Wheat Board payments do not make farmers rich, they protect them from extreme price fluctuations."¹⁰¹

Has the existence of a Wheat Board in Canada in fact done more to achieve the oft-stated goal of preserving the family farm? Both Prairie Canada and the northern Great Plains states have suffered substantial rural depopulation and farm loss. A comparison of the states of South Dakota, North Dakota, and Montana with the provinces of Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba reveals that farm loss has been more precipitous in the United States by about 12%. This is true whatever year is chosen as a base, and whatever individual census quinquennium is chosen.¹⁰² Obviously, the existence of the Canadian Wheat Board is not the only variable between Canada and the United States, and this better record in Canada cannot be solely attributed to it. But given that the U.S. "open market" system is extolled as a model by many of the Wheat Board's critics, the comparison perhaps has some relevance.

And perhaps this explains why a representative wheat pool survey in 1981 discovered that the board enjoyed continued popularity of among prairie producers. The *Country Guide* reported that the survey found

"solid, indeed overwhelming, support for the wheat board's present role in selling export wheat and feed grains. The [1800 farmers surveyed] believe the board quota and selling system gives the most equitable and stable flow of income to farmers; like a pooled price; and much prefer the board (over private companies) as the agency responsible for selling export wheat and feed grains."¹⁰³

¹⁰⁰ Morgan, *Merchants of Grain*, 291, 328-33.

¹⁰¹ Carol Giangrande, *Down to Earth: The Crisis in Canadian Farming* (Toronto, 1985) 68, 76.

¹⁰² Author's calculations based on figures from *Historical Statistics of Canada*, *The Canada Year Book*, *Historical Statistics of the United States*, and *The Statistical Abstract of the United States*.

¹⁰³ Dave Wreford, "Wheat Pool survey: good news and bad news for CWB" *Country Guide*, November 1981.

Farmer antipathy to the private grain trade had dissipated since the now-ancient battles over the monopoly Wheat Board. The relationship between the prairie wheat pools and the Winnipeg Commodity Exchange became almost cordial. But in a mid-1980s interview with historian Allan Levine, Wally Madill of the Alberta Pool made clear that "here is a basic difference in market philosophy between Pools and the trade.... The Pools have always supported the Wheat Board concept and still do."¹⁰⁴

After 1985, the Canadian Wheat Board's job was made much more difficult by a world wheat glut and the massive export subsidies provided by the EEC and by the United States "export enhancement program."¹⁰⁵ Despite this, the Board increased Canada's share of the world market by 1.5 percentage points, to 19.8%. "Canada has continued to increase its sales," said Charles Mayer, the minister responsible for the board in the new Conservative government, "... because it produces top-quality wheat, has a worldwide reputation as a reliable supplier and has built up a network of personal relationships around the world. The problem is the...huge subsidies that Canada's competitors in the EEC and the U.S. receive."¹⁰⁶

Most prairie grain growers shared Mayer's frustration, but understood the need to continue with Canada's traditional system of orderly wheat marketing. Farmer Bruce McGregor of Chipman Alberta responded calmly to news that the Canadian Wheat Board's 1987 advance payment would be 18% less than in 1986, and 40% less than in 1985. "I've got a lot of bitches, but not a lot of answers," McGregor told a reporter. "The Yanks have a big enough treasury to respond to the Europeans. We can't afford big subsidies like the others can, but the programs we've got are good ones."¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁴ Levine, *The Exchange*, 217.

¹⁰⁵ Oliver Bertin, "U.S. policies bedevil Canadian farmers," *Globe&Mail*, 22 December 1986, B1, B9.

¹⁰⁶ Hugh Winsor, "Farm debate runs on," *Globe&Mail*, May 1 1987, A1-2.

¹⁰⁷ Matthew Fisher, "Prairie farmer won't blame Ottawa for woes", *Globe&Mail*, 22 April, 1987, A4.

In Conclusion:

An historical survey of western debates about wheat marketing over the eight decades since the first Canadian Wheat Board was established suggests a number of generalizations.

1. In its conception and its operation, the Canadian Wheat Board has been a uniquely Canadian response to grain marketing. It has been well adapted to the particular needs of prairie grain growers, who must sell 75 per cent or more of their wheat crop in export markets. It has also met the needs of Canadian governments unable to provide the massive subsidies of Canada's competitor nations.
2. Because of this, the Canadian Wheat Board has worked well from both a public policy perspective, and from the point of view of prairie grain growers. Marketing through the board has historically helped to smooth out the large seasonal and annual fluctuations in international wheat prices. Historians claim no predictive value for their work, but if history is any guide, international wheat prices will continue to oscillate from season to season and from year to year. The present outlook for wheat is excellent, but only three years ago commentators suggested that the western wheat economy was permanently doomed by overproduction and depressed prices. The only thing that is predictable about the world wheat situation is that it is unpredictable!
3. Periods of "dual marketing," when the wheat board has lacked a monopoly, have not worked well. The crop years of 1935-6, 1938-9, 1939-40, 1940-41, 1941-2, and 1942-3 demonstrate that when the wheat board lacks a monopoly, a "lose-lose" situation is created from a public policy perspective. When wheat prices were strong, the non-monopoly Board got no wheat, and when wheat prices fell rapidly, the non-monopoly Board got virtually every bushel of wheat grown on the Prairie, and the federal treasury made up the differences between the initial price and the eventual sale price.
4. Historically, prairie farmers have been consistent and enthusiastic supporters of a monopoly compulsory Canadian Wheat Board. Near-unanimous demands from producers helped to bring the board into existence in 1935, ensured that its monopoly would be maintained after 1945, and extended the board's authority over oats and barley in 1949.¹⁰⁸
5. There is no evidence that the existence of a monopoly Canadian Wheat Board has been historically disadvantageous to those prairie farmers required to deliver to it. The historical

¹⁰⁸ In historians' jargon, prairie producers had considerable "agency" in the creation, maintenance, and extension of the board. The cursory historical section of the recent Report of the Western Grain Marketing Panel (Winnipeg, 1996) ["Developments in Grain Marketing Since 1935," 5-6] fails to recognize this agency on the part of prairie farmers.

evidence in fact suggests the opposite: the Wheat Board has been criticized by non-Westerners on the grounds that it discriminates in favour of prairie farmers, and against farmers in other regions.

The social, political, and economic contexts in which the Canadian Wheat Board was created have changed in the five decades since the Board assumed its monopoly form. But despite these changes, the essential reasons which caused the Canadian government to create, maintain, and periodically modify the monopoly Canadian Wheat Board, and the prairie grain grower to support the Wheat Board, remain.


John Herd Thompson

August 14, 1996
Montreal, Quebec

Appendices:

1. The Evolution of the Monopoly Canadian Wheat Board
2. 1930 cartoon supporting the idea of a "compulsory 100% Pool" - a monopoly Canadian Wheat Board.

Appendix 1

The Evolution of the Monopoly Canadian Wheat Board

31 July 1919: The First Canadian Wheat Board was established to market the entire 1919-1920 crop. The board was a striking success, but was terminated, over protests from prairie farmers, 18 August 1920.

1923: Unable to obtain a compulsory monopoly government wheat board, prairie farmers organized three provincial wheat pools to market the crop cooperatively. Between 1924 and 1930, the pools market more than half the prairie crop.

1927-1931: A movement within the pools attempted without success to create a "100% compulsory pool."

1931-1934: A catastrophic decline in wheat prices brought prairie agriculture to its knees and destroyed the wheat pools as marketing agencies. Prime Minister R.B. Bennett appointed J.I. McFarland to purchase wheat in an attempt to arrest the decline of prices.

1935: With the strong support of the wheat pools, Bennett proposed the Canadian Grain Board Act, which called for a permanent federal government monopoly marketing board for coarse grains as well as wheat. Protests from the private grain trade change the board to a voluntary Canadian Wheat Board.

1935-1943: The Wheat Board and the open market co-existed, but the resulting dual marketing system satisfied neither the federal government nor prairie grain growers.

27 September 1943: To assure the Wheat Board supplies of grain, the federal government granted the board a monopoly and stopped futures trading on the Winnipeg Grain Exchange.

1945-1947: With the enthusiastic support of the vast majority of prairie producers, federal governments continued the Wheat Board monopoly by order in council. In 1947, with near unanimity, parliament extended the monopoly until 1950.

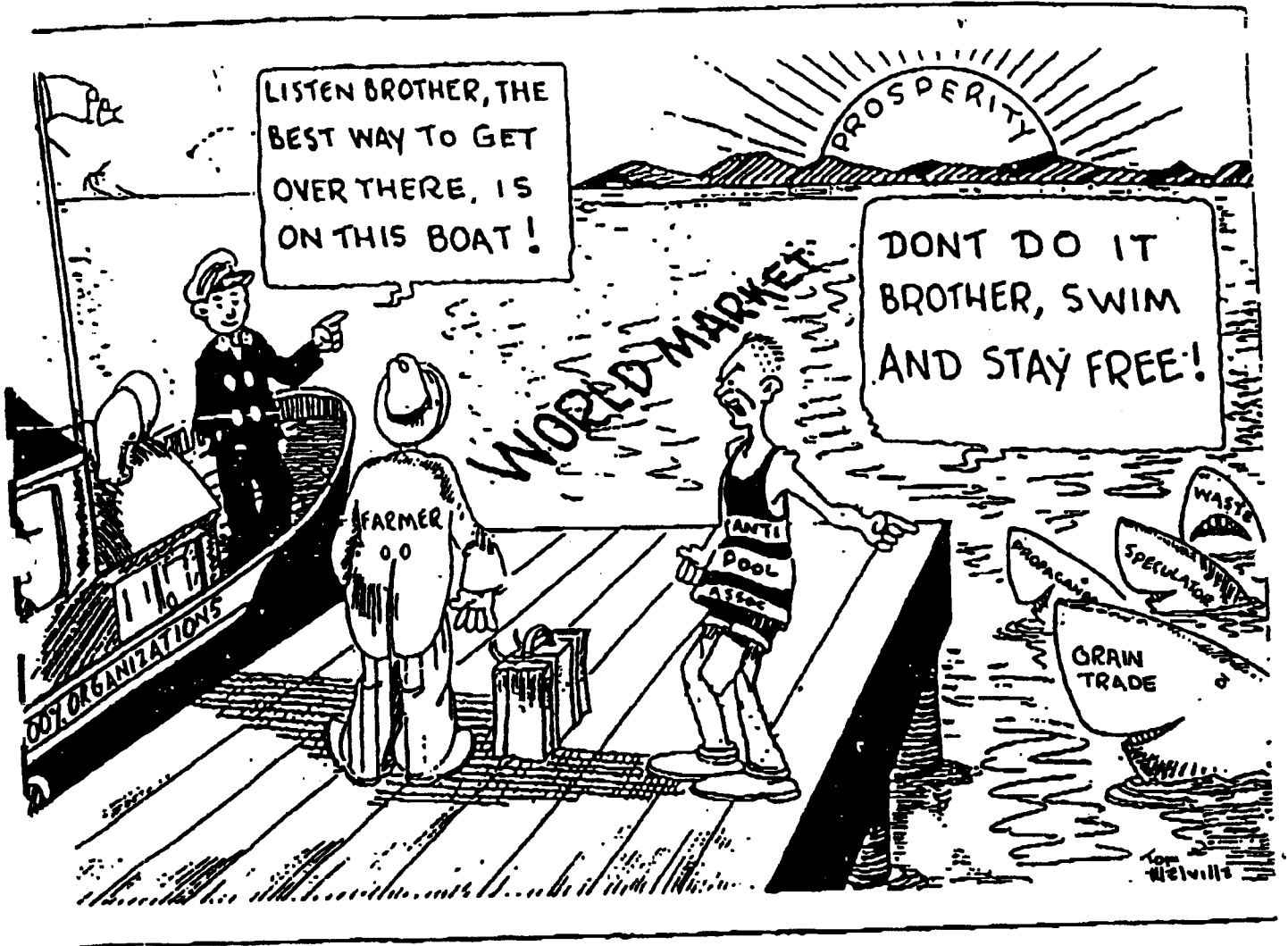
1949: At the insistence of prairie producers, oats and barley were assigned to the Wheat Board.

1950-1962: A unanimous parliament renewed the Wheat Board monopoly in 1950, 1953, 1957 and 1962. Producers were equally unanimous: Saskatchewan MP Ross Thatcher estimated that "99 percent of the farmers in the west...support the wheat board."

1967: Parliament, again unanimous and again with enthusiastic producer support, made the Wheat Board's monopoly permanent.

Appendix 2

1930 cartoon supporting the idea of a "compulsory 100% Pool" - a monopoly Canadian Wheat Board.



John Herd Thompson

Curriculum Vitae

February 1996

1. Personal

Born Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada, 18 September 1946.
Citizenship Canadian; United States Permanent Resident
Married, two children.
Languages: English and French.

2. Academic Positions

Professor of History, Duke University, 1990-
Professor of History, McGill University, 1986-1990
Visiting Professor, Duke University, Autumn 1987, 1989-90
Visiting Professor, Simon Fraser University, 1982-83.
Associate Professor of History, McGill University, 1977-85.
Assistant Professor of History, McGill University, 1975-77.
Lecturer in History, McGill University, 1971-75.

3. Education

Ph.D., Queen's University, 1975.
M.A., University of Manitoba, 1969.
B.A. Honours, University of Winnipeg, 1968.
Manitoba Public and Secondary Schools, 1952-1964.

4. Publications

a) Books and Monographs:

John Herd Thompson and Stephen J. Randall, Canada and the United States: Ambivalent Allies a volume in the series The United States and the Americas, Lester D. Langley, ed., (Athens, University of Georgia Press; Montreal, McGill-Queen's Press, 1994) Pp xiv + 387.

Ethnic Minorities During Two World Wars, No. 19 of the Canada's Ethnic Groups series, (Ottawa, Canadian Historical Association, 1991) Pp iii + 20.

Les Minorités Ethniques Pendant les Guerres Mondiales, (version française of the above) Pp iii + 21.

with Allen Seager, Canada 1922-1939: Decades of Discord, volume 15 of The Canadian Centenary Series (Toronto, McClelland and Stewart, 1985) Pp xiv + 438.

Frances Swyripa and John Herd Thompson, eds., Loyalties in Conflict: Ukrainians in Canada during the Great War (Edmonton, Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies/University of Alberta Press, 1983) Pp 213.

John Herd Thompson, The Harvests of War: The Prairie West 1914-1918 (Toronto, McClelland and Stewart, 1978) Pp 207.

b) Sections of Books:

John Herd Thompson, "The West and the North," a chapter in Douglas Owsen, ed., A Student's Guide to Canadian History, vol II: Post-Confederation (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1994), pp 341-373.

"Nicholas Flood Davin," a 4000-word biography in Volume XIII of The Dictionary of Canadian Biography (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1993), pp 248-253.

"Canada's Quest for 'Cultural Sovereignty': Protection, Promotion and Popular Culture," in Stephen J. Randall et al. eds., North America Without Borders?: Integrating Canada, the United States, and Mexico (Calgary, University of Calgary Press, 1992), pp 269-85. Reprinted in Helen Holmes and David Taras, eds., Seeing Ourselves: Media Power and Policy in Canada (Toronto, HBJ-Holt Canada, 1992), pp 188-201, and in R. Douglas Francis and Donald B. Smith, eds., Readings in Canadian History: Post-Confederation (Toronto, HBJ-Holt Canada, 1993).

_____, "Writing About Agriculture and Rural Life," in John A. Schultz, ed., Writing About Canada: A Handbook for Modern Canadian History (Scarborough, Ontario: Prentice-Hall Canada, 1990) pp 97-117.

_____, "The Voice of Moderation: The Defeat of Prohibition in Manitoba," in Susan Mann Trofimenkoff, ed., The Unknown Decade: Western Canada during the 1920s (Ottawa, 1972) pp 170-190.

c) Articles in refereed journals:

John Herd Thompson, "Entry and Exit: the Dynamics of Immigration to Canada," The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, 533 (March 1995) pp 185-198.

_____, "Integrating Regional Patterns into a National Canadian History," Acadiensis XX:1 (Autumn 1990) pp 174-184.

Ian MacPherson and John Herd Thompson, "The Business of Agriculture: Prairie Farmers and the Adoption of Business Methods, 1880-1950," Canadian Papers in Business History, I (1989) pp 245-269. Reprinted in R. Douglas Francis and Howard Palmer, eds., The Prairie West: Historical Readings, second edition, (Edmonton, 1992), pp 475-496.

John Herd Thompson, " 'Writing History with Lightning': Mackenzie King's Television Biography," Canadian Historical Review, LXIX:4 (1988) pp 503-510.

G.R.I. MacPherson and John Herd Thompson, "An Orderly Reconstruction: Prairie Agriculture in World War II," Canadian Papers in Rural History, IV (1984) pp 11-32.

Robert Ankli, H. Dan Helsing, and John Herd Thompson, "The Adoption of the Gasoline Tractor in Western Canada," Canadian Papers in Rural History, II (1980) pp 9-40.

John Herd Thompson, "Bringing in the Sheaves: The Harvest Excursionists, 1890-1929," Canadian Historical Review, LXI:4 (1978) pp 467-489.

_____, and Allen Seager, "Workers, Growers, and Monopolists: The 'Labour Problem' in the Alberta Beet Sugar Industry during the 1930s," Labour/le travailleur, 3 (1978) pp 153-174. Reprinted in Michael Horn, ed., The Depression in Canada: Responses to Economic Crisis (Toronto, Copp Clark, 1988) pp 30-50.

_____, "Permanently Wasteful but Immediately Profitable: Prairie Agriculture and the Great War," Canadian Historical Association Historical Papers (1976) pp 193-206.

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_____, "Webb and Winnipeg were Synonymous: The Political Career of Ralph H. Webb," Red River Valley Historian (1976) pp 1-7.

_____, "The Beginning of our Regeneration: The Great War and Western Canadian Reform Movements," Canadian Historical Association Historical Papers (1972) pp 227-245. [This article has been reprinted three times:
S.D. Clark et al eds., Prophecy and Protest: Social Movements in Twentieth-Century Canada (Toronto, 1975) pp 87-104;
R.D. Francis and D.B. Smith eds., Readings in Canadian History: Post-Confederation (Toronto, 1982) pp 287-302;
R.D. Francis and Howard Palmer, eds., The Prairie West: Historical Readings (Edmonton, 1985) pp 450-465.]

J. Lee Thompson and John H. Thompson, "Ralph Connor and the Canadian Identity," Queen's Quarterly, LXXIX:2 (1972) pp 159-170. Reprinted in Dennis Poupard and Paula Kepos, Twentieth-Century Literary Criticism, vol 31 (Detroit, 1989) pp 113-117.

John H. Thompson, "American Muckrakers and Western Canadian Reform," Journal of Popular Culture (1972) pp 1059-1070.

d) Non-refereed publications

John Herd Thompson, "Comic Relief: The American Comic Book in Canada," Horizon Canada, 91 (January 1987) pp 2174-79.

e) Encyclopedia Articles

In The Canadian Encyclopedia, second edition (Edmonton: Hurtig, 1988):

- "Beauharnois Scandal," p 191
- "Cartoons, Humorous," pp 374-5
- "Norris, Leonard Matheson," p 1507
- "Simpkins, James N.," p 2005
- "Unger, James," p 2211

f) Scholarly Book Reviews

Reviews are listed alphabetically by journal title, then by volume, date and page numbers of the issue in which the review appeared.

Alberta: 1:2 (1989) pp 129-30.

American Review of Canadian Studies: VI:1 (1976) pp 176-179; VI:2 (1976) pp 144-145; VII:1 (1977) pp 131-134; VIII:1 (1978) pp 73-75; XVII:4 (1987-8) pp 332-4.

Books in Canada: 9:3 (1980) p 10.

Canadian Ethnic Studies: X:1 (1978) pp 146-147.

Canadian Historical Review: LXII:2 (1972) pp 209-210; LXIII:4 (1972) pp 457-458; LIX:2 (1978) pp 249-251; LIX:3 (1978) pp 372-373; LIX:4 (1978) pp 513-515; LXI:2 (1980) pp 228-229; LXV:4 (1984) pp 596-597; LXVI:2 (1985) p 306; LXVI:3 (1985) pp 416-417; LXIX:2 (1988) pp 264-5; LXIX:3 (1988) pp 432-4; LXX:1 (1989) pp 123-4; LXXV:4 (1994) pp 610-612.

Histoire sociale/Social History: 19 (1977) pp 171-172; 22 (1978) pp 527-528.

Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History: 15:3 (1987) pp 318-9.

Journal of the West: (1982) pp 82-83.

Labour/le travail: 6 (1980) pp 219-220; 8-9 (1981-2) pp 378-380.

Manitoba History: 27 (Spring/94) 26-27.

Ontario History: LXXX:4 (1988) pp 332-4.

Prairie Forum: 6:1 (1981) pp 213-215.

Queen's Quarterly: 93:4 (1987) pp 917-20.

Revue d'histoire de l'Amérique française: 43:3 (1990) pp 419-21; 44:2 (1990) pp 276-9.

Shofar: Winter, 1987.

Social Science History: forthcoming

g) Work in progress

The Oxford Illustrated History of the Prairies; a 90,000-word volume contracted to Oxford University Press for completion in 1996.

Family, Farm and Community: The Rural West, 1860-1960 (in collaboration with G.R.I. MacPherson of the University of Victoria), a comprehensive rural history of the Canadian Prairie West from the beginning of European agricultural settlement to the "great disjuncture" following World War II.

Other scholarly activities

The professional memberships which best define my academic interests are those I hold in the Canadian Historical Association, the Association for Canadian Studies in the United States, the Agricultural History Society, the American Historical Association and the Society for American Baseball Research. I have been particularly active in the CHA, serving on the Publications Committee from 1978 until 1983 and chairing the Western History Group from 1978 until 1980. I was elected to the Council of the CHA in June 1992, and served until August 1995.

I have refereed scholarly articles for Acadiensis, the American Review of Canadian Studies, the Canadian Historical Review, CHA Historical Papers, Forest & Conservation History, Histoire sociale/Social History, the Journal of Canadian Studies, Labour/le travail, Manitoba History, Ontario History, Pacific Northwest Historical Quarterly, Prairie Forum and Social Problems. I have evaluated book manuscripts for the University of Toronto Press, McGill-Queen's Press, Prentice-Hall, the Canada Council and the Canadian Social Science and Humanities Research Council's Aid to Scholarly Publication Program. I served terms on the editorial boards of Histoire sociale/Social History, Labour/le travail, and The Journal of the West, and am at present a member of the editorial boards of The American Review of Canadian Studies, Forest & Conservation History, The Journal of the Canadian Historical Association and Saskatchewan Historical Baseball Review.

Referees available on request.

5. Film and Television Work

The Heritage Minutes, 1988-

The Heritage Minutes are one-minute historical microdramas broadcast on all Canadian television networks and in cinemas since March 1991. Support for the project comes from the CRS Foundation and Canada Post; producers are Patrick Watson and Robert-Guy Scully. I serve as English-language historian to the project. My contribution is made at all phases of production, from conception through production. Fifty Heritage Minutes have been released to date. A VHS videocassette of the Minutes is available on request.

Origins: A History of Canada to 1867, 1987-88.

Origins was a thirteen-episode historical documentary produced by TV Ontario. I served as one of four historical consultants on the project.

6. Awards and honours

Margaret McWilliams Medal, Manitoba Historical Society, 1968.

W.L. Morton Gold Medal, University of Manitoba, 1969.

Canada Council Leave Fellowship, 1977-8.

Canadian Historical Association Regional History Prize for The Harvests of War: The Prairie West, 1914-1918, 1981.

Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council Leave Fellowship, 1984-5.

H. Noel Fieldhouse Award for Distinguished Teaching, McGill University, 1985.

Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council Grant in support of Prairie-Rural History, 1986.

Governor-General's Award finalist for Canada 1922-1939: Decades of Discord, 1986.

James A. Jackson Lecturer, University of Manitoba, March 1987

L.H. Thomas Distinguished Visitor, University of Alberta, October, 1992