

Grain

we were asked to accept a price on our grain lower than a price which would have given us a chance to restore our economic fortunes after the depression.

After the war when the price controls were removed from goods affecting all the rest of the people of Canada, the western grain farmers were asked to subsidize every consumer of grain in this country at the price of 77½ cents a bushel long after the controls were taken off. That amount of 77½ cents a bushel can be understood only when you realize that across the line our neighbours in the United States at one time were receiving as high as \$3.50 a bushel for wheat of inferior quality. That was the sacrifice the people in Canada asked western Canada to make. We made that sacrifice gladly during the war, with no questions asked, but there was an understanding given by the government of this country during the war that when the days of conflict were over we would be given a hand in our difficulties, both on the question of development and on the question of grain prices. So we have this question of cash advances tonight. It meets not all the problems of the farmers but it does answer one need, and one that we in western Canada have felt deeply about the last seven years.

Furthermore, following the war, the people of western Canada were asked to go into a gigantic gamble on their product: we in western Canada were asked to go into the British wheat agreement where we voluntarily accepted a lower price than the world price on the pledge made by members of parliament who now sit in this house on the opposite side that when that agreement was over we would then receive a higher price than the world price, whatever that might be. That gamble cost the western farmers \$600 million. The good people of Canada supported the government of that day in providing us with a partial recompense to the tune of \$65 million. We appreciate that 10 per cent return on the losses that we took. This gamble was taken with the support of the government of that day and one of the opposition parties, namely the C.C.F. and that gamble failed.

I well recall seven years ago the movement in western Canada to ask us to march on Ottawa to ask the government for 25 cents a bushel in addition to the \$65 million we received. I refused on behalf of the party I led in the province of Saskatchewan to take part in that venture because I said we had gone into that gamble with our eyes open and even though the Conservatives were the only ones who had opposed that gamble, the people of western Canada had supported it by their votes in 1949 and we had to be prepared to accept that loss. So when they talked

[Mr. Hamilton (Qu'Appelle).]

about the march on Ottawa I said, "No, let us look forward to seeing the losses that are coming."

I put on record in western Canada my feelings in a series of articles under the heading "The Dangers Ahead in marketing". One of these articles dealt with this question of the piling up of grain in storage and so on. I am not going to deal with this any longer but it turned out in this country of ours in 1950 that we in western Canada and in all parts of Canada were heading into difficulties in the agricultural industry. All across that western country protests began to be heard and no one paid any attention. When the election came along in 1953, so great was the division among the people of western Canada in support of the various parties that representatives of the government of that day were returned who should not have been returned if the majority of the people of western Canada had had their way.

Today we know in western Canada and all through Canada that there has been a great revolution going on in agriculture. We know that fundamental reforms are necessary. The fundamental purpose to which we must set our hands is to give to agriculture a fair share of the national income. Under this government we pledge ourselves to the fundamental reform. But in the meantime, it is necessary for us to see that the machinery of marketing which we have works a little bit better. That is the reason for this cash advance legislation which is before the house today. This thing dramatizes to western Canadians the need for this attitude in agriculture.

In this house over the last several days during the debates on this issue I have heard the statement that this cash advance bill does not meet all the fundamental needs of agriculture. I say this to you, Mr. Speaker: Who asserts that it does? What single person or organization in Canada asserts that this legislation meets all the fundamental needs of agriculture? Certainly not any member of this party on this side of the house. I hold in my hand a little pamphlet which was issued and distributed in western Canada; it is entitled "The Progressive Conservative Agricultural Policy". I presume it was distributed all across the country. I look at this policy and find 13 points. What we are dealing with here tonight is only one of them. There the members of this house will find the agricultural policy of this party which will be brought forward step by step by this government. The question has been chased around a little bit and I think this statement must be made clearly.

What then is the need for this legislation? Since it does not meet all the fundamental