

the agricultural prosperity of the West. We must make farming—grain-growing—pay in the West, and we must do it soon.

The foregoing is the language of two Montreal newspapers, and I am sure that farmers everywhere in this country will endorse it. There has been a vast amount of wealth produced in the three prairie provinces, and on the whole, throughout the Dominion, there has been prosperity, so far as production goes, for the agricultural communities. But in the case of agriculture, as in the case of every other business, the question to the man who produces is, not how much wealth he produces, but what are his net returns when he has balanced his books at the end of the year. And unfortunately, while we have had a vast stream of wealth pouring from the western prairies, it seems to me a tragedy that those who are engaged in that industry have not sufficient returns from their labours to make life comfortable or as it should be for those who produce that wealth. To make this position plain I might quote a few figures which were submitted in the Manitoba legislature by the premier of that province. Premier Bracken points out that a bushel of wheat to-day is in price only a little higher than it was in pre-war days. In 1914 you could purchase a gang plough for \$84, whereas to-day it costs \$153. A mower in 1914 cost \$57; to-day it costs \$93—as a matter of fact, I know it costs \$100 at the present time. A waggon could be bought in 1914 for \$111; to-day the price of a waggon is anywhere from \$160 to \$180. Three farm implements that could be purchased in 1914 for \$253 to-day cost \$415. Now, when you realize that fact and remember that the price of a bushel of wheat is only just a little higher than it was a few years ago it does not require much argument to show what position the farmer is in with respect to the raising of wheat. There are other figures too, which I might cite. In 1912, 10 fleeces from a sheep would purchase a suit of clothes; to-day it takes 31 fleeces to purchase a suit of the same quality. It is needless for me to elaborate along this line, because these figures show quite plainly just exactly the problems the farmers have to meet to-day in carrying on their industry.

We must look facts squarely in the face. I am not a pessimist; I am not going to preach blue ruin, nor do I believe that Canada is going to the dogs; I believe that there is a great future before this country and before agriculture in this country, and I hope that as the years go on we shall see agriculture in Canada occupying the place which it

deserves. If we reflect for a moment on world history we shall realize, I think, the fact that everywhere and at all times, in the case of every nation that has ever risen to prominence, whenever in a nation agriculture has begun to decay, the beginning of that nation's decay has occurred at the same time. Now, I have no idea that such a thing is likely to happen in this country. But if that be true of the nations as a whole, it is absolutely necessary that the agricultural industry in Canada should receive our very best attention.

Let me come now to the cost of doing business. I think the great complaint that we hear at this time all over the Dominion is the high cost of production, the cost of doing business; and going from one calling to another, from one industry to another, you find always that the excuse advanced is that so much has to be charged because the cost of doing business is so high. I would call attention to this fact. An industrial concern raises the price of its product to meet increase in costs; but the farmer to-day cannot say: I am going to charge more per bushel for my wheat because it costs me more to raise it than it did formerly. His product is sold upon the markets of the world, and consequently he has no control over its price. By reason of these conditions the farmer is at the present time at the bottom of the pyramid.

I wish I could convince everyone of the absolute necessity of placing this very important calling upon a solid basis. I know very well that changed conditions require new methods to cope with them. We sometimes get a good deal of advice handed out to us as to how we ought to help ourselves, therefore it may be well for me to tell hon. members what some of my neighbours are doing in Manitoba. There we realize that wheat-raising is perhaps a little precarious; at the same time it must be remembered that next year and for a great many years to come wheat-raising will continue to be the greatest industry of the prairie provinces. Let me say that the return from our western wheat is going to be one of the principal factors in paying the public indebtedness of this country. Nevertheless we have to realize the danger of trusting entirely to a wheat crop, and our farmers are rapidly turning their attention to what is called "diversified" farming; it used to be called "mixed" farming. Last winter I had the privilege of going out to a great many meetings in Manitoba, and I may tell hon. members that politics was not so much discussed as what improvements we could make in conducting our