

Mr. BENNETT: That is true. I was in England at the time.

Mr. ROSS (Moose Jaw): Nevertheless Mr. John I. McFarland was much closer to my right hon. friend than he ever was to the wheat pools of western Canada prior to his appointment.

Mr. BENNETT: That also is inaccurate. Mr. McFarland and I had no business relations for years prior to that. He was president of the Alberta Pacific Grain Company and I was vice-president of it until I sold out. The purchaser of it is in this building.

Mr. ROSS (Moose Jaw): Mr. Speaker, I still maintain that Mr. John I. McFarland was a much closer friend of the right hon. the leader of the opposition than he ever was of the wheat pools of western Canada. He was brought down here to handle a proposition which it was impossible to handle in view of the policies that we had in effect in the country at that time. Things went on from bad to worse in regard to wheat in Canada until, in the last session of the house, action was put through by which a board could be formed, and that board was given leave to handle the wheat of Canada which our Canadian farmers wished to sell to that board. It was given the right to fix a minimum price for the sale of the wheat. The idea throughout the dominion was that a board was being created to set a minimum rate for Canada's wheat crop for 1935. What happened in actual practice? A board was formed, but until the opening-gun-of-the-campaign speech of my right hon. friend the leader of the opposition the set price of wheat was not set, or at least if it had been set it was not given to the public. For about seven or eight days after that there was a set price only on No. 1 northern; there was no set price on a lower grade. Then it took some seven or eight days beyond that period before a set price was placed on feed wheat.

In western Canada this year we had until July the promise of the largest wheat crop that section has known since 1915. It was a beautiful crop, an even crop practically all over western Canada. But in July, rust, which had started in the southern states some time before, gradually found its way north until it struck the western wheat crop, and it did tremendous damage. In the western part of Saskatchewan, where the rust did not hit, frost came early in August and to a large extent ruined the crop there. A western Canadian crop when ripe must be harvested. In our section, where the fields of grain are large and there is danger of winds and early snow in the fall, the moment the crop is

ready to cut the farmer must get into the fields and harvest it. We found in western Canada last year, long prior to the announcement of my right hon. friend of the set price of wheat, that many of the farmers of that section had to start to harvest their grain. It was of low grade and the yield was low. It started to move into the elevators and, with the uncertainty regarding the price, prices dropped in the country elevators and the farmers had to sell their wheat for what they could get at that time. It was not a case of holding it until later; it was such a poor crop, such a poor yield, that in order to be able to pay the wages they had to pay from time to time and in order to buy the gasoline and oil with which to run the engines of the combines and threshing machines to harvest the crop it was necessary for the farmers, as they threshed loads of wheat, to take them to the country elevators and sell them so as to obtain the money with which to buy supplies to carry on the balance of their harvesting. The result was that many farmers in southern Saskatchewan and Manitoba were forced to sell wheat, and especially feed wheat, for as little as twenty and twenty-one cents per bushel, eleven to twelve cents under the price later fixed by the board. So these people sustained a loss of from ten to twelve cents per bushel on a very low grade crop with a very low yield.

The intention of this House of Commons, when the bill was passed last year setting up a board, was that the board would be set up in time to fix prices before the crop was harvested, so that the farmers would receive the fixed minimum price for their grain. However, for some reason or another better known to my right hon. friend than to myself, that price was not set until the election campaign was on. These farmers in western Canada have lost many dollars because of the action of my right hon. friend in not having that price stated long before it was. This resolution asks that coarse grains be brought under the board. This is very late in the season, I would suggest. My hon. friend was in the house last year when the bill was before parliament. Why did he not use his influence then to have these coarse grains put under the board, and see that a price was set for them?

Mr. PERLEY (Qu'Appelle): How does the hon. gentleman know I did not?

Mr. ROSS (Moose Jaw): Well, I know the hon. gentleman.

Mr. PERLEY (Qu'Appelle): That is an insinuation, too, and the hon. gentleman should withdraw it.