

The first bill set the figure at 60 cents, and the government tried to put that over. It does not matter what minister was in charge; the government must take the responsibility for trying to put through a bill making provision for a payment of only 60 cents. Even the 70 cent figure is nowhere near the cost of production and does not give the farmer any reasonable remuneration for his labour. The new bill also sets a limit of 5,000 bushels from any one farmer. While it is difficult to go into details in discussing these two measures, still I must say I believe vast discrimination is shown there. It can be argued that a man may have ten or fifteen thousand bushels, and anything over the 5,000 bushel limit will come under one of these pooling operations and eventually will come into competition with the 5,000 bushels which the board will have to sell. I do not think this figure of 70 cents will provide proper remuneration for at least seventy-five per cent of the producers.

I should like briefly to consider the act of 1935, which is amended by Bill 63. I regret that I have not time to recite what led up to the passing of that bill, but it was passed after the government of the day had the benefit of four years' experience in the stabilization operations carried on by Mr. McFarland. Those were strenuous times. I well recall the difficulty we experienced in bringing some people to support the operations carried on by Mr. McFarland; and, if I may say so, I played a considerable part on a few occasions in impressing upon the government the importance of what was being done. In any case, with that experience, the government thought it necessary, in order to save the farmers, to pass a measure of a permanent character, and Bill No. 98 was passed. Without going into all the details I will say that practically everyone in western Canada considered the 1935 Canadian Wheat Board Act good legislation. To substantiate that statement I need only refer to the reaction to the statement by the Minister of Agriculture on February 16, to the many protests that were received from the west, and to the fact that a committee came to Ottawa on two occasions in connection with this matter. I am sure all Canada, as well as hon. members of this house, were surprised to hear the minister announce that change in policy, which caused great concern and dissatisfaction all over the west. The provincial governments immediately became concerned. It happened that the three provincial legislatures were in session, and they passed very strong resolutions. I have in my hand a resolution coming from the province of Manitoba, moved by Premier Bracken and seconded by

[M. Perley.]

Mr. Willis, leader of the opposition, which was adopted unanimously, calling upon this government to consider setting the price at 87½ cents. Alberta and Saskatchewan took similar action, though Saskatchewan did not go quite so far. Possibly there was some reason for that.

I would say, Mr. Speaker, that the marketing problem has become chronic, and I do not think it will be helped very much by the statement of the minister on these bills. Hon. members in every group and party have consistently supported a wheat board. We all remember the speech of the hon. member for Melville (Mr. Motherwell) last year. When this new policy was announced we all became alarmed. This problem, which I say is a vital, economic problem, must be dealt with by a long-range policy, as the leader of the opposition (Mr. Manion) said this afternoon. Temporary measures such as this will not be sufficient. In his report Judge Turgeon recommended that the wheat board should remain in case an emergency should arise. I should like to quote further from this report to indicate that on different occasions evidence was given to the effect that the exchange system of marketing had failed under certain circumstances and at certain times. Before dealing with the bill in such detail as may be possible, however, I should like briefly to review the period from 1929 to 1939.

Last night the Minister of Agriculture reviewed the whole marketing problem, going back to the time when we first grew wheat in western Canada. He did it very carefully and well. Of course, he started with the year 1901 when the grain exchange first organized. Then he dealt with the years 1917, 1919 and 1921. I might recall to his mind that in the 1921 campaign there was a definite promise of a wheat board, and that promise was made by the hon. member for Melville who at that time was a candidate. However, we did not get that board. Legislation was put on the statute books, but it died there.

I now come to 1929. We recall the optimism and the buoyant prices there were up to that time. I am reminded of the budget speech of May 1, 1930, made by the present Minister of Finance (Mr. Dunning) in which he said all markets were lost, and he referred particularly to our market for wheat in the United Kingdom. On that occasion he indicated that during the previous year our exports of wheat to that market alone had decreased to the extent of 143,000,000 bushels.