

was due to the fact that they harvested a crop of 560,000,000 bushels of wheat that year, most of which we were able to sell at a high price. When one takes that into consideration and remembers that in 1942 the cash income of the farmers across Canada was \$1,114,000,000 and in 1943, \$1,396,000,000, or almost \$1,400,000,000—and there is no doubt in the world that if we get an average crop this year that figure will be increased by some hundreds of millions of dollars—one can see that the farmer is certainly better off. I am not saying that the farmer is getting all that he ought to get, or that his condition has improved as much as some people like to picture it, but I am saying that at the present time he has the best conditions economically that he has ever had, and if that is not better than parity then I do not know what parity is. Again, if one wishes to know whose definition of parity it is, let me say that the definition of parity that I am using is the definition which was put out by the farm federation in 1940 when we started the drive for parity prices. Now that we have passed it I am not going to let anyone, with my consent, change the definition.

We were asked for a certain thing. We started out to get it. We got it and we passed it, and when we passed it I said to everyone who made representations to the government: "I am not satisfied with parity prices for the farmer." I said that in 1940. I have repeated it in this house every session since. I am not satisfied with parity prices for the farmer, because for ten years prior to this war the farmer took returns such as no other industry in Canada and very few farmers elsewhere in the world took for their farm products. That is illustrated by the fact which was emphasized by the hon. member for Melfort when he spoke this afternoon, that back in 1932 the total cash income of the farmers of Canada was \$383,000,000. When hon. members rise in this committee at the present time and complain that the condition of the farmer is not better when the cash income is \$1,396,000,000, more than \$1,000,000,000 higher than in 1932, then I say that they are not giving consideration to all the facts in connection with the matter. When I say that I am not suggesting that this government is responsible for all the change, but I would remind the hon. member for Haldimand and the hon. member for Qu'Appelle that they were not on sound grounds either this afternoon or this evening when they suggested that there was a good crop in Ontario and Quebec last year.

Mr. PERLEY: I did not suggest that.

[Mr. Gardiner.]

Mr. GARDINER: The hon. member for Haldimand suggested that was one of the reasons why we got such high returns. One of the poorest crops that they have ever had in Ontario in the last fifty years was harvested last year, and in spite of that we have this \$1,396,000,000 of income across Canada on our farms. While a year ago when someone twitted us with taking credit for the increased income and said that we had the best crop we ever had, I said that I preferred to be on the side of those who are responsible for the climate, and liked it better to have them on our side, on this occasion when the same hon. members come back and twit us with the idea that we cannot take credit because we passed through a year of the poorest crop in fifty years, then I think they are playing two ways with a vengeance. The fact is that the income was \$1,396,000,000 in 1943, and that it has been going up as compared with 1943 every week since the beginning of 1944, and if conditions continue as they are we shall probably have a very much increased cash income in 1944.

The CHAIRMAN: We are now on item 2. The minister having answered all the questions asked, I suggest that we should stay within the item.

Mr. CARDIFF: I shall stay within the item, because I believe it would include surplus beef. There is no one in the house who admires more than I do the way in which the Minister of Agriculture expresses himself in regard to government policy. I would not expect him to admit that government policy was to some extent responsible for the bottleneck in the beef market this spring. Nevertheless, that is so.

Mr. GARDINER: I did not say that.

Mr. CARDIFF: Two years ago we were short of beef. We were told to hold our beef at least one year longer so that we could increase the weight, and thus have more beef. A great many farmers held their beef a year longer with the result that this spring we had a surplus of beef, and could not dispose of it. Some time ago, I cannot just say when, meatless Tuesday was arranged. That continued until there was no space left to store beef. We had no outside market. The market was for home consumption. Then meatless Tuesday was discontinued.

I blame the government for that condition. Before every space was filled, meatless Tuesday should have been cut off. I do not suggest that any government could be perfect, because I realize no one is perfect. But when the government makes a mistake it should be ready to admit it.