

not be faced with the spectacle with which we were faced yesterday. The definite promise was made during the campaign that provision would be made for the appointment of this committee as soon as the house met. I think the minister should tell us who is in control of the wheat board and who are the advisers of the board in Winnipeg. We should be told what members of the cabinet make up the advisory committee, how often it meets with the board and so on.

The farmers of western Canada have never been satisfied with the price of 70 cents a bushel which was set for wheat. I can recall the discussion on Bill No. 63 which took place last year, but I am not going to take the time to refer to it now. All I shall do is to recall to hon. members the protests which were received from all over the west against the setting of the price at 70 cents. We had a resolution submitted by a western committee headed by Mr. Bracken as well as a petition signed by some 600,000 people of western Canada. The farmers want a fixed parity price comparable with the price they must pay for the products of industry. The farmers are willing and anxious to do their part, but they want an equal sacrifice by all. I understand that last September the British government made a suggestion to this government, when they appointed Mr. Rank, that they would be willing to consider a fair price. Possibly the Minister of Mines and Resources (Mr. Crerar) will shake his head. He made a trip overseas on behalf of the government to discuss the matter. But before he did so, I understand a definite proposal was made, when Mr. Rank was appointed sole purchaser of wheat and other food cereals for the United Kingdom and France, that if the government would close the Winnipeg grain exchange the allies would consent to a fair price. I make that statement on good authority.

Mr. ROSS (Moose Jaw): What is the authority?

Mr. PERLEY: My authority is that a note was sent to me in this chamber by the then Minister of Trade and Commerce, Mr. Euler, inviting me to go to his office; I was with him there an hour, and he told me the story, and informed me that his colleagues in the cabinet would not allow him to do what he was asked to do.

Mr. ROSS (Moose Jaw): When was that?

Mr. PERLEY: Now, sir, we discussed the price.

Mr. ROSS (Moose Jaw): When was that?

Mr. PERLEY: If the hon. member would just keep his seat for a little while—

[Mr. Perley.]

Mr. ROSS (Moose Jaw): I am not rising. I just asked when this took place.

Mr. PERLEY: This happened about the 9th or 10th of September last, just before we went home.

Mr. ROWE: Page Euler!

Mr. PERLEY: I asked him about the price. I suggested what it might be. He said he could not tell me that. I offered a guess. He, naturally, would not tell me. But he did tell me it was practically agreed that the grain exchange would remain open until the price of wheat reached about a dollar and a quarter.

Those are the circumstances. I say this, that had this government and the wheat board made a reasonable, businesslike suggestion to the British government last September, we would have had a much better price than seventy cents; we would have had nearer a dollar for the duration of the war, and we would not have had the mess we have to-day.

Without going into any long argument on this matter, because I should like to refer to a few other subjects of importance to the west, I contend that we are entitled to a statement from the minister. He should tell us whether there is to be any amendment of the wheat board act. We in the west were given to understand that there would be an amendment, as soon as the house met, making provision for an interim payment.

In this connection I desire to lodge a vigorous protest concerning the method which the government employed in announcing their policy to the end of December 31 of this year. We should have to-day an announcement by the minister as to how the government proposes to handle the 1940 crop. We should know what the price is likely to be. A full report should be tabled with respect to the 1938 crop and the final disposal of it, so that the matter can be discussed upon an appropriate item of the estimates. We should have a full report to date on the 1939 crop, showing exactly, from a financial point of view, where the government stands with respect to the wheat they are carrying, what advances have been made, and so forth. Not since 1936, may I point out, have we had a proper report. There is not an hon. member who knows to-day what the government's policy is. Certainly none of us knows where we stand financially with respect to this whole wheat business. I say that this parliament is entitled to know. It was due to hon. members to have this matter discussed long before now, and to know the reasons for the action which was taken. Will there be any amendment made to existing legislation? We should know that