

*The Address—Mr. Fair*

cent in stooks, 19 per cent swathed and 6 per cent standing. This is not a very bright picture.

In addition to some farmers being unable to harvest their crops, those who were fortunate enough to get them harvested were unable to deliver one bushel. On account of the early frost and bad weather last year, a heavy percentage of the grain was low grade. Because of a lack of markets, and later on a lack of boats and box cars, much of that grain remained in the elevators in various places all over the prairie provinces. When the milling grades of this crop were available for shipment, the elevators could not handle them. This explains why many appeals have been made to the Minister of Trade and Commerce (Mr. Howe), and many letters have been written to the transport controller, the wheat board and the board of transport commissioners, to have something done. In spite of these appeals we find that many areas are without box cars. Some weeks ago the wheat board found it necessary, in order to fulfil commitments it had made, to issue orders that only milling grades of wheat could be loaded. The points from which this grain was to be taken were those nearest to Fort William, and those from which the quickest turn around could be made. We understand that all of these measures were necessary but a number of farmers are placed in a difficult plight.

This letter is typical of the many I have received from farmers. It reads:

Is there any way you could fight the terrible way the grain board has of handling our grain? We cannot sell one bushel of wheat even as the elevators are plugged and so far this year only nine railroad cars have come into Mannville. The two crops previous to this were completely dried out around here and we had to spend every cent we had to buy feed from around Vermilion and Irma. Now this year the frost lowered my wheat to grades 5 and 6 which the elevators are not permitted by the grain board to take, even if they did get room. The government from Ottawa announced that there were lots of cars for moving grain. Why are they allowed to announce such falsehoods? True, there are plenty of empty cars, and all empty elevators at Viking, but why the awful situation all along our line? I have my gas, repair bills, hired man, etc., to pay before he leaves for the bush and can't do it as my wheat is on the ground in piles and granaries full with no way to sell it. Had it not been for a few cattle to sell in the past few years, we farmers could not have carried on at all.

I believe that illustrates the plight in which a large percentage of our farmers find themselves. In some cases they did not even have the cattle to sell. When one realizes the exorbitant price that is being charged for binder twine, for machinery and many of the other things that enter into the cost of production, one can understand the plight of

[Mr. Fair.]

these people. I am fully aware of it, because I have been in exactly the same predicament for a little more than 30 years.

Recently requests have been made to have loans granted on the grain not yet harvested. If it is feasible I believe it is necessary, and I hope that something along that line will be done. I am well aware of the government policy concerning credit restrictions, and that has caused many bank managers to refuse loans to farmers who were formerly able to get the money they wanted. Government policy, of course, must be obeyed, and this is the result. When the Minister of Agriculture spoke a week ago today he gave quite a talk on agriculture, as he usually does, and tried to point out that if the farmers were to adopt different methods of farming—I believe he was referring to horses—they would not find themselves in their present condition. The Minister of Agriculture has not been on the farm very much recently, or on many farms, at any rate, because at the present time we have not sufficient help on the farms to operate in the old way by working horses and using smaller machines. With horses and smaller machines you just cannot handle the land that we are handling in the west. Because of the long working hours and poor living accommodation on many farms, many of our farm workers go to the cities where they can have more of the conveniences of life, shorter hours, better pay and pensions to take care of them in their old age. Therefore it has become necessary to buy bigger machinery, and in many cases that machinery runs twenty-four hours a day when the weather will permit. The present system of farming is entirely necessary under our present conditions. If we had had a policy for agriculture in Canada that would guarantee the farmers and their help a standard of living equal to that in other occupational lines, then we would be able to use more horses and more horse-drawn machinery.

**Mr. Wylie:** Who wants to use that?

**Mr. Fair:** The price of farm machinery is entirely too high today. Some people may defend these prices. When the committee on prices is dealing with other matters perhaps it might also deal with the cost of producing farm implements. There is no comparison whatever between the price of those items at the present time and the price of grain. There is no connection whatever between them. For that reason we have been asking for many years to have parity prices established.

Further, in connection with the price of hogs, a very good suggestion was made by the hon. member for Selkirk (Mr. Bryce),