

to all the farmers of western Canada, and it is not fair that one group should be discriminated against, even if they owned them all, in favour of another group. There should be a fair and reasonable return for the storage of the grain so that the farmers and all the people of Canada would not be unduly shorn of the money for which they are so hardly pressed.

Mr. WOOD: But is it not true that one of the qualifications for membership in the pool was that a man should be a land owner?

Mr. BENICE: But all the farmers of the west are not pool owners. Furthermore, less than half of the country elevators are owned by the pool and the United Grain Growers. The book to which I have referred can be procured from the board of grain commissioners. The hon. member can get a copy from the statistical branch of the Department of Agriculture.

It has been conclusively shown in this house that a price of 70 cents is not sufficient to cover the farmer's cost of production and keep him on the land as a contented producer. That statement, in effect, was made by the Minister of Agriculture last fall, and agricultural statistics men have been quoted in this house from time to time to show that it takes considerably more than that to cover the actual cost of production.

The argument has been used in the past that to increase the price would encourage the production of wheat. The Minister of Agriculture, speaking in this house on March 12 when the policy was enunciated, said:

It is considered by the government that only 230 million bushels of wheat can be delivered to the board on the open market or otherwise. In view of all the uncertain circumstances, the government is of the opinion that the advance upon the amount delivered should not be increased. The outstanding reason for that conclusion is the opinion that production of wheat should be decreased.

Well, I examined that statement and puzzled over it, but I cannot understand it, because with a limit on the amount that can be sold I do not see how the price can possibly affect production. If there is only a certain amount that can be sold, what difference will the price make so far as encouraging production is concerned?

The question is also asked, when most people speak of wheat, what should the price be. The Minister of Agriculture asked that question of some hon. member—the leader of the opposition, I believe, although I am not certain. I am not prepared to say what the price should be. I would leave it to men far better versed than I am in agricultural matters, but my own opinion is that the net

result should not be one fraction of a cent less than the net amount obtainable under the proposal placed before the government by the Saskatchewan government. In the words of the hon. member for Weyburn, that should be the absolute minimum.

The inevitable question is, where is the money to be obtained. The only thing I can say is, it will come from exactly the same place that all the other money comes from. If there is a limit on the procurable money—and of course I agree that there is—then there should be equality of sacrifice among all classes and all individuals. No one class should be asked to make a greater sacrifice than another, but under this policy the farmers are being asked to make far greater sacrifices than any other class. The Minister of Agriculture put it most realistically when on November 14 last, speaking of the returns to the wheat farmer, he stated, as reported at page 102 of *Hansard*:

If he is to receive more money, it must come from the sale price of wheat, or from the taxpayers of Canada, or from both.

That is quite true. But in determining what the price should be for wheat, or anything else, the policy of equality of sacrifice should be kept uppermost in the mind of the government.

I am curious to know into what fields the government wants the farmer to go if he is to stop growing wheat. Does the government want him to produce more pork? The eastern farmer is suspicious that it does. If that is so, I would remind the Minister of Agriculture that in his statement of February 27 he said, "We are producing in Canada all the hogs we require, both for domestic and for export consumption."

Mr. GARDINER: If I might be permitted to interrupt: as soon as the hon. member is through—and I congratulate him on the manner in which he is dealing with this question; he is sticking to the question itself—I should like to have permission of the committee to put on *Hansard* a statement with regard to the question he is now raising, which I was not in a position to do before to-day. It might have an important bearing on some aspects of the discussion of this question.

Mr. BENICE: I should be very glad to have a statement from the minister. At the same time, speaking on February 27, the minister indicated that cheese production should be confined to those places that are best suited to it, and of course Saskatchewan was not included amongst those. The minister did indicate that we were receiving a very good