

suggest to the minister and the government that they should lose no time in establishing a western division of the national research council to work on the prairies with a strong man as director, to assist the government in developing and arriving at a thoroughly workable program on which a long-term policy could be based. The very man is in the west—personality, training, experience, administrative and organizing ability, trusted by the people. If his services could be secured, he would prove a valuable help to the government in this great work.

Agriculture must be given equal privileges with other industries if this country is to reach the destiny it was meant to attain.

At six o'clock the house took recess.

After Recess

The house resumed at eight o'clock.

Mr. JOSEPH NEEDHAM (The Battlefords): I rise on behalf of my constituents to oppose the 70 cent wheat bill. Let me state briefly one or two reasons why I do this. The first is that agriculture, especially in my constituency, is not in the position it was in a few years ago. Had the grain growers been in what we might term a normal position they might not have the criticism that they have at the present time. But there have been a number of years of depression, from the point of view of returns to the farmer, and the reserves they had a few years ago, not only their reserves in cash but their farm implements, home utensils and things of that kind, are depleted, so that they are not in the position they were in some years ago to take this reduction in price. I am safe in saying that the crop year on which we are now entering is perhaps the most serious for agriculture up to the present time. For that reason this reduction in price is very hard on agriculture.

Then again, a new problem has arisen lately; that is our possible market is not what it was. It has in a measure disappeared. I suppose this is really the first time in sixty years that the world does not want our Canadian wheat, that is the amount we produce. In the 1920's we exported something like 800 million bushels a year, now our export has dropped to 540 million. The question is how this wheat that we have on hand at present, plus a possibly fair crop this year, is to be disposed of. I do not know whether I understood the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Gardiner) correctly the other night when he spoke of barter. I have not read his speech in *Hansard*

since, but I understood him to intimate that if we adopted a policy of barter, say with Germany, we would be at a great disadvantage in the exchange of our wheat for the commodities the farmer needs, such as implements and so forth.

Mr. GARDINER: My statement was to the effect that at present those countries are not anxious to barter for our wheat at any price.

Mr. NEEDHAM: Well, there is the situation; our markets are largely gone; a new problem has arisen.

Again, if this reduction in price goes into effect, I am much concerned as to the consequences to agriculture generally. I am thinking more of the youth who are coming of age who should be starting out to farm. I remember last fall talking to a man whom I have known for twenty-five years, during which time he has raised an average of perhaps 8,000 bushels of grain annually. He has two boys who wanted to leave and go somewhere. He said, "I have persuaded them to stay another year." But the oldest one said, "Well, dad, you have been here thirty years and the condition you are in to-day does not offer me much encouragement to follow farming." Those lads know nothing else so far as training is concerned, but are well qualified in every way as farmers. But what future is there for the young farmer in the west to-day? That is a serious problem.

I have here a petition from my constituents opposing this wheat bill. It is signed by 10,028 farmers, merchants and other electors in my constituency.

Mr. EVANS: Schoolboys?

Mr. NEEDHAM: This petition reads:

We the undersigned petitioners pray that the amendments to the 1935 Wheat Board Act be not now enacted; that the wheat board be permitted to continue as provided in the act now in force; that the guaranteed price for wheat delivered in the 1939 crop season be not less than eighty cents basis one northern at Fort William; and that additional legislation be enacted to provide relief assistance for those who suffer a partial or complete crop failure.

In addition, I have had many personal letters and petitions from groups that have met together. I want to read a resolution passed which was sent in from the Edan district:

We the undersigned electors of the Dominion of Canada hereby petition the government to consider well the amendments to the Wheat Board Act before putting them on the statutes. Sixty-cent wheat means that western Canada will not be able to support themselves, leave alone paying past debts. The farmers must have at least eighty cents for their wheat in order for them to survive and for the business men in the west to carry on.