

him around a part of that circle and I will defy him to find a farm there, with the exception, perhaps, of a few dairy farms, that has paid operating expenses in the last three years.

My hon. friend referred also to the number of motor cars in Saskatchewan. Some of my hon. friends to the right say, "hear, hear." It is a common idea on the part of certain people in this country that a farmer should never sit on anything but a wagon box. I do not believe in that, Mr. Speaker. Being a farmer myself I maintain that a serviceable automobile, obtainable at a reasonable price, has become a necessity in modern farming. My hon. friend said that every man in twelve in Saskatchewan had an automobile. I do not think that is enough. In a province where farming is the basic industry—it is practically the only industry there—in a province of great distances—and I know something of those distances, for I homesteaded there thirty-two miles from the nearest town—in respect to a province such as that I would reverse my hon. friend's statement and say that only one out of every twelve had a motor car. I think that would be nearer the mark. Furthermore, in giving those figures, he did not state what proportion of these cars had passed through the hands of the bailiff. He gave us no idea of the number of motor cars owned by men who had moved in there, and purchased perhaps with the money they brought in with them. I maintain again that the motor car has become a necessity on the modern farm.

Another question with which my hon. friend dealt was the United States tariff on farm products; and in dealing with that he asked in effect, what could the Canadian government do to remove the United States tariff against our farm products. I would make this suggestion to my hon. friend and to the government: that the best way to get rid of the American tariff against our products is to reduce the cost of production in this country, and if you do that, there will be a clamour in the United States against the tariff which raises the cost of production in that country.

The condition of agriculture in Canada to-day is not wholly the result of the reconstruction period through which we are passing, nor is it due to post-war conditions generally. If you go back to the years prior to the war, you will find that agriculture at that time was on the down grade. In the years 1912, 1913 and 1914 the farmers of western Canada were selling their grain below the cost of production, and had it not been for the war intervening, the government would have had to deal several years ago with this same situation that

[Mr. Bancroft.]

confronts us to-day. The net prices received for grain on the farm this fall were similar to those of 1911. Yet in 1911, as was pointed out by my hon. friend from Victoria, Alta., (Mr. Lucas) yesterday, we could buy an eight-foot binder for \$180 and to-day the same binder costs us \$276. I submit that about the same comparison could be made in connection with most of the articles that enter into the cost of production on the farm. Coupled with this was the fact that in those years many immigrants were coming into the country, and many young men who were taking up homesteads were willing to work on the farms at a very reasonable rate in order to acquaint themselves with the local methods and conditions. When we compare the period before the war with the present time, and realize that in those earlier years men were being forced off the farm in no small numbers, it will give us some idea of the deplorable condition that agriculture finds itself in to-day. It is a well-known fact that for years in this country success or failure on the farm has depended largely on the amount of free labour a man could command in his farming operations. When a man's family was small and he had to hire every bit of help required, he invariably had a hard time getting along, but as his family grew up and furnished for a few years free labour on the farm, that was the time the farmer got ahead if he ever did get ahead. I submit that there can be no permanent prosperity in this country while this condition exists, so long as the great basic industry of Canada is dependent for its success on free labour. The fact is, the fiscal policy of this country is not a sound one for the development of our natural industries. That policy was evolved at a time when the Red River valley the most fertile valley in the world, was the principal grain-growing area of western Canada. It was evolved at a time when municipal taxes were negligible, when labour was cheap, when the land was clean; and all these things contributed to a low cost of production. But to-day municipal taxes in Manitoba are in the vicinity of one dollar per acre, due to the extension of roads, and the building of bridges, drainage and schools; and the high cost of transportation and of the necessities of life has raised the cost of production to a point where farmers are quitting the farms in large numbers. There are four thousand less on the farms in Manitoba to-day than a year ago. I submit that that is a serious situation, and one that requires careful analysis, and until we have found out the reason why these men are deserting the farms