

*The Address—Mr. Harkness*

with purchasers for our grain and induce them to buy it or perhaps induce them to buy it in larger quantities than they might otherwise. Certainly we have a large-scale selling problem on our hands, so far as the disposal of our grain is concerned. I certainly hope the Department of Trade and Commerce and the wheat board will use realistic methods in carrying out the selling program.

There can be no question whatever that more storage facilities are required. To begin with, the farmers themselves must build more. I have very little sympathy with some of the large farmers who have plenty of money and who also have large piles of grain lying on the ground. To my mind, it is entirely their own fault, because they had the opportunity and the money with which to build the necessary accommodation, and they failed to do so. So we need not waste any sympathy on them.

There are a large number of smaller farmers, however, whose credit position was not good and who have not been able to build granaries on credit from the lumber companies. Those companies have put out so much lumber on credit for which they have not yet been paid that they have just clamped down and said, "No more credit to farmers for the building of granaries." As a result many farmers who would have built granaries did not do so, because they were not in a position to do so.

Farmers generally should be encouraged, as they were during the war, to build these granaries through a process of accelerated depreciation. Perhaps they could get some help under the Farm Improvement Loans Act for increasing their storage space. I am of the opinion that the government as well as the wheat pool could do a good deal more by way of issuing information which would encourage farmers to take this action, and thus supply more storage space on their farms.

Then in addition to more farm storage we need more country elevators, and terminal elevators with greater storage capacity. In his speech the minister stated that the long-term average over 21 years was around 350 million bushels, and he pointed out that production in the last three years had been abnormal. There is no doubt that production in those years has been above what we had considered to be the average, but I do not think it was as abnormal as at first it might appear. In other words I think it is likely that our long-term average for the next 20 years is likely to be at least 100 million bushels or more greater than we had in the years up to 1943 or 1944.

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The point is that methods of cultivation have improved. There is no longer so much of what might be described as ignorance in the matter of cultivation methods, nor is there any longer a shortage of machinery. The result is that today it is possible to carry on an improved method of cultivation. I believe the result will be that we will have a considerably better average crop than that to which we had grown accustomed in the 20 years leading up to the last war.

Then, in addition to improved methods of cultivation, we see that the farmers are now using fertilizer to a greater extent, which has had the effect of increasing the yield considerably. The use of fertilizer is bound to expand, and this is another factor which will make for an increased yield.

Then we must consider the benefits derived from irrigation. While most of the irrigated land is not devoted to the growing of wheat, nevertheless irrigation will produce better crops, because it raises the general water level of the area in which the irrigation system is being followed. This means that wheat on non-irrigated land will receive the benefits of water which otherwise it would not receive, so that in very dry years wheat will be produced on land close to irrigated areas.

All told I do not think there is any question but that our average wheat production will be considerably higher than the amount to which we had grown accustomed. We should plan on an average of at least 100 million bushels more per year. This of course entails a considerable increase in storage capacity that must be provided all along the line. This is a matter for the government, the wheat board, the line elevator companies and the farmers to consider.

In that connection I should like to refer to the grain handlers' strike last year which prevented us from getting rid of large quantities of wheat. We retained several million bushels of wheat which otherwise would have been disposed of, thus providing that much more room for this year's crop. The government was particularly culpable in letting that strike continue for months. I, in common with many other members, asked week after week what action the government was taking, or what it was prepared to do to settle the strike. But it did nothing. It was afraid of offending the strikers and the labour unions on the one hand and the farmers on the other. It took no action—just sat with folded hands.

That is the sort of thing which should not have been permitted to happen, the sort of thing for which the government is culpable, and the sort of thing which we hope will not occur again.