

ago, when I was managing director of a large paint and varnish concern which owned linseed oil mills, I said to my friend Mr. Fielding, then Minister of Finance: "Why don't you put a duty on flaxseed? The best flax in the world is grown in our Canadian West. It is equal to the best Russian Baltic flax. Still we have to buy all our flaxseed under the Duluth market; flaxseed grown in North and South Dakota." As a result a 15 per cent duty was imposed on flax. Immediately the production expanded and, if my memory serves me right, the output was something like twelve million bushels. The flaxseed itself was most excellent. The argument I heard when in the West at that time was that if you were late in getting your regular crops in, flax was a good thing to use on a first breaking.

I am not opposing this Bill, but it appears somewhat strange to me that when you come to the allowance of \$2 an acre for summer-fallow—which is very generous—you also include coarse grains, and flax and grass. According to a gentleman in another place, these prairie farm bonuses would amount to \$10,000,000, and the acreage bonuses to \$30,000,000. We have not touched yet the increased amount to be provided if the price of wheat is raised from 70 cents to 90 cents a bushel. I merely draw the attention of the honourable senator from Peel and the acting leader to these things for this particular reason, of which all honourable senators are fully aware. While this country is not complaining, we are labouring under tremendous taxation due to the war. We know that the deadline for income tax is Tuesday next. It behooves this Government to do everything it can to retrench. If conditions in the West are so bad that this legislation is absolutely necessary, then of course I have nothing to add, and I leave further discussion of the Bill to those who know much more about it than I do. But living where I do, I am often asked: "Why are these demands in regard to our Western friends recurring and increasing?"

Before resuming my seat I should like to direct attention to what my illustrious predecessor (Right Hon. Mr. Meighen) had to say last session in regard to extraordinary powers given to the Minister. Section 13, on page 5 of the Bill, provides:

The Minister may, with the approval of the Governor in Council, appoint such administrative and technical officers and employees as he may deem necessary for the purposes of this Act and at such remuneration as may be likewise approved.

These are tremendous and unusual powers to give to a Minister of the Crown, and I do

hope that when the Bill is in committee honourable senators will agree with me that some restriction should be imposed; not that I have not confidence in the Minister who is handling these affairs now, but because I think it is wrong for any Minister in any Government to have such unlimited powers as those I have just referred to. I hope that we shall hear from a number of practical grain growers, and that they will inform us as to why we have to pass such legislation as this. It appears to be very wide in its scope; but if it is necessary for the people of the West to have it, I have no further suggestions to offer.

Hon. W. A. BUCHANAN: The honourable member from Vancouver South (Hon. Mr. Farris) suggested a change in the preamble of one of the Bills before us this afternoon. If I were making any proposal at all with regard to this Bill, it would be to change the title so that it might explain exactly the purpose of the Bill, which is to try to induce the Western farmer to stop raising too much wheat and go into the raising of something else. I am inclined to think that without legislation of this kind the farmers would stay in wheat and the surplus would grow, and we should have a more serious problem than ever.

I know something of the operations of this measure, and would illustrate them by mentioning the case of a man not far from my own city of Lethbridge. By reason of the bonus for summer-fallow last year, this man, operating a farm of many thousands of acres, put in 1,600 acres of corn, and to that extent got out of the raising of wheat. There are people who have doubted the possibility of raising corn in Western Canada. I may tell them that corn is being raised in southern Alberta, and the man I speak of boasts that he has the biggest field of corn in Canada, and probably he is right. What he did he was induced to do by this legislation. Otherwise he probably would have raised wheat on that land and would have added to the surplus. There was a good result from the raising of that 1,600 acres of corn, because a rancher took down five hundred steers and fed them there during the late fall and winter. Some of those corn-fed steers were shipped, and I am told that the prices received for them topped the market.

As I said in the beginning, the purpose of this legislation is to get the farmers out of the raising of wheat and into the raising of coarse grains, such as corn, flax, oats and barley. As one who has lived in Western Canada for a considerable time and who has been up against the problem of the farmers throughout many years, I would say that this legislation is right along the line of what