

at the last moment, so to speak, what he is going to do with his land. In Alberta barley ripens very much faster than wheat or oats. I do not think there is a remote chance of ripening wheat this year on my own farm—if I may mention it again—and the same remark applies to large tracts of land in the middle and northern portions of Alberta. Oats will be a difficult crop to ripen in my neighbourhood; the end of August we are liable to have frosts which freeze out the crop, and as oats, in an average Alberta season, require fully four months in which to ripen, very little calculation will show that only three and three-quarters months are left now even if the land were seeded. But the land is only being ploughed now. I do not happen to have accurate information which I can give to the House; I have not even definite information as to what has happened on my own land in the last few days, because a farmer has to make his decisions quickly; but it is conceivable to me that, having regard to the shortness of the season and the excellent prices that are being received for barley, a great deal more barley will be grown this year than in other years in the districts with which I am acquainted. If, one of the main outlets of barley happens to be through a trade which the Government takes upon itself under the War Measures Act to cut off in a moment—I understand that to be the proposition of my hon. friend—then I personally would have doubt about how far the farmers would go on with the extra cropping of barley that I think it is very conceivable and likely they will be undertaking. The War Measures Act is a very necessary Act or Parliament would not, in its wisdom, have passed it; but for the Government to act too rashly under that Act may very easily have the effect of producing results diametrically opposite to those intended by hon. gentlemen who urged the Government to take sudden and ill-considered action. Herbert Spencer, the great philosopher, is responsible in his books for saying that nine out of ten Acts of Parliament passed by any Parliament in Europe had diametrically the opposite effect of what the Parliament intended. That statement is not very complimentary to legislatures, but he produces a marvellous quantity of information in his books to prove the wisdom of his contention, and I think I have given to the Government good ground for seeing that it is just possible that a sudden dislocation of industry along this line may produce results disastrous rather

[Mr. M. Clark.]

than helpful, not only to the country but to the farmers. I do not know whether barley is used in this country as human food; we feed it on my place only to hogs and a little to cattle. It is used, however, as a food, and it may be, if the war lasts, that we shall require to use barley more than we are doing at the present moment.

The point I wish to make is that if the Government do anything too rashly under the War Measures Act, they may do more harm than good and may produce results diametrically opposite to those which I have no doubt hon. gentlemen on this side wish to ensue from the recommendations they are making to the Government. We are telling the farmer to produce, to put his land under crop. A farmer must be the judge in the main of what he produces; he knows the markets he has to deal in, and for the life of me I cannot understand a man going to a farmer and saying in one breath: Produce, and in the next: we propose to cut off under the War Measures Act a very important proportion of your market. I cannot understand the attitude of mind of one who does that. The other day we had a proposition to commandeer all the wheat in Canada, and that was right on the back of the Government having adopted a resolution to give free wheat to the States, for which boon we had been calling for five years. There is no logical connection between rejoicing over free wheat one day and asking the Government to commandeer wheat the next day, because commandeering, I need not tell this House, is a very serious interference with freedom, whether in regard to wheat or anything else. Commandeering is the autocratic action of Government. If you commandeer the wheat to-day and stop the market for barley the next day—well, farmers to my knowledge have had a very hard time for the last thirteen or fourteen years, but as a comparative amateur at the business who is just beginning to get his head above water, I should not know what to raise next.

Mr. W. B. NORTHRUP (East Hastings): Mr. Speaker, there are some questions which can be quickly elucidated, and on which after a single argument hon. members can vote intelligently; there are others which depend entirely upon facts which will assist hon. members in coming to a conclusion. The motion before the House at the present time is one of those which depend upon facts, and therefore there cannot be the slightest difference of opinion