

standing agricultural experts in the whole Dominion of Canada. He says:

I think I mentioned the total crop area in Canada is 58 million acres, 40 million of which is in the three prairie provinces. The large share of the acreage of the three prairie provinces is in cereal crops. If it became necessary for any big proportion of the 40,000,000 acres to be changed into say hay crops or coarse grains, which in turn produced live stock, you can see at once the impact of the 40,000,000 acres on the 18,000,000 acres. Even though the 18,000,000 acres may produce twice as much hay per acre, a large shift in the three prairie provinces would have a terrific effect on the economy of the rest of the country. If the shift were very large the effect would be absolutely disastrous on the farmers of the other provinces. I do not think the disaster to the fruit grower or to the highly specialized grower would be much less than to the dairyman or the man who raises beef cattle. That is why I think it is essential in the interests of the entire country that our problem be considered as a national problem, and some plan should be designed to protect the agriculture of the whole country and not of any particular region alone. I think, too, if this reasoning is right, since the farm population is roughly half the total population, the result of a failure to deal adequately with our problem here will have a disastrous result on the whole economy of the country, because you can't regulate the business enterprises of half the people without seriously damaging the enterprises of the other half. It is not only a question, in my judgment, of the inter-relationship of agriculture of the different regions, but it is also a fact that if there is a large part of our agricultural economy depressed or ruined, it must affect the whole industry of the country.

There is the considered opinion of one of the leading agricultural experts in western Canada who attended the conference on markets for western farm products. His considered opinion was that we should see to it that the western farmer was not forced into competing in hay and beef and butter and cheese with the farmers of eastern Canada. I say to the representatives in this house of eastern Canadian farmers who are being told, I have heard, that it would be in their best interests to vote against this bill, that they can go back to their farmers at home and say: "By virtue of the fact that we kept the western farmer in the growing of wheat we probably kept your butter and cheese and beef and pork from being driven down to levels at which you could not sell it and live." And hon. members can ask their farmer constituents who criticize: "Is that what you wanted me to do as your representative in parliament?"

During the war the wheat fields of western Canada practically saved the situation for Canada and the empire; we know that the time may come when the wheat fields of Australia may not be available to Europe, and when once again the fate of civilization will depend upon western Canada being able

[Mr. Tucker.]

to feed it. For that reason, if for no other, I say that in these days when one part of the British commonwealth, the centre of it, is spending billions and billions in arming itself, surely we should make our contribution to our own defence, and I think it more important than spending money on guns and destroyers that we should maintain our farming industry so it may do its part, if the time comes once more, by feeding the peoples of Europe.

There is another feature upon which I wish to touch. Some people seem to think that the wheat situation is quite hopeless. The world carry-over in August, 1939, will be between 1,000 million and 1,100 million bushels; in 1934 the carry-over at the same time of the year was 1,199 million bushels, much higher than it is this year, and that did not prevent the price from going in the crop year 1936-37 to an average of \$1.29 a bushel; it did not prevent the price from going in the crop year 1937-38 to \$1.18 a bushel. I ask hon. gentlemen to bear in mind that the carry-over today is not as great as it was in 1934. The price can again as it did in 1934 rise to over one dollar a bushel. Some people seem to overlook the fact that the total disappearance of wheat is almost four times the total carry-over, that the world needs to eat almost 3,900 million bushels of wheat in one year and the carry-over is just a little over one-quarter of that.

I should like to wind up on the monetary theme, and my friends will, knowing my strong feelings in that respect, forgive me for that. There has been a great deal said in the past about the cost to Canada of looking after the unemployed and the farmers of the west and doing all the things that we as a civilized nation had to do to justify the existence of civilized government in this country. We talk of the 900 million dollars that Canada has gone into debt, but I draw the attention of hon. members to the fact that that 900 million dollars has fed men and women and children who otherwise would have starved to death. It has helped us to keep in existence the great farming industry; it has looked after the unemployed, the sick and the homeless. And at what cost to the people of Canada? Let me quote one sentence from the budget speech of the Minister of Finance (Mr. Dunning):

Although our dominion funded debt has increased substantially since 1930, the annual interest burden of that debt, allowing for elimination of tax-free securities, is lower than in any year since the war. So the increase in dominion debt has not required any increase in taxes to carry it.