

Hon. Mr. HAIG: If there had been such a tax in the three Prairie Provinces during the last forty years, the fund would probably be sufficient, because in that period we had the high prices of the war years, and the 1915 crop, which was the biggest in the history of Canada. However, I am criticizing the Bill, not from that standpoint, but rather on the ground that it taxes the good farms for the benefit of the poor farms.

Now I am going to say something that I could not say if I were running for election. Nevertheless it is a fact. There is a large area in southern Alberta, southern Saskatchewan and a corner of Manitoba, where the people can never make a living off the land. Seventy years ago, when the Dominion Government sent out an expedition to look over the country in connection with the building of the Canadian Pacific Railway, it was reported that the Great Desert of America extended up into that country. I can remember men coming down from there to the province of Ontario in 1892 and telling my father that the land would not produce anything; that they were starved out. Yet that country is being farmed to-day.

Hon. Mr. MULLINS: One crop in ten years.

Hon. Mr. HAIG: This Bill will result in a constant struggle by the people there to keep that land under cultivation, and the Government will be called upon from time to time to help out.

Hon. Mr. BUCHANAN: Where would you put those people?

Hon. Mr. HAIG: It would be cheaper to move them out altogether and take them to northern Alberta, northern Saskatchewan or northern Manitoba, where such conditions do not exist. I have seen that country. I have seen the grasshoppers, the drought and the rust. True, the land south from Moose Jaw and south from Swift Current is very fertile, but there is not sufficient rainfall year by year to make farming pay. The only thing you can really grow there is wheat. My honourable friend (Hon. Mr. Buchanan) knows that while there is wheat-growing land south of Lethbridge it will not grow grass. The old buffalo grass is all gone.

Hon. Mr. BUCHANAN: Is it not a fact that in good years the very best wheat is grown in those areas?

Hon. Mr. HAIG: I admit that freely. I admit that No. 1 Hard can be grown in southern Alberta, southern Saskatchewan and southern Manitoba when there is rainfall. But this Bill will simply keep people on

Hon. Mr. BEAUBIEN.

poor land. I want to say candidly that I think the Government are making a mistake, although I would not for a moment oppose the Bill unless our whole policy were changed and these farmers were moved. Take the area between Lake Winnipeg and Lake Manitoba: I do not believe that in the last twenty years the farmers there have had more than one crop which yielded above twelve bushels to the acre. Frequently the yield is only five or six bushels. They will come under this Bill, and will remain there. That is what I object to. The insurance feature of the Bill is good, but I am persuaded that it will be of no use.

I want to warn honourable members that Western Canada does not accept this Bill as a substitute for a guaranteed price on wheat. The committee of representatives of Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba, headed by the Premier of Manitoba, rejected this Bill in toto as a substitute for the guaranteed price of grain. They say they will accept the Bill, but that it must not be regarded as an answer to the demand of Western Canada for some support in the crisis through which it is passing.

The farmers of our three provinces are facing as serious a crisis as has ever been known in this country, and it is not of their own making. True, in days gone by, many of them may have been extravagant; but that is not what we are dealing with here. During my boyhood on a farm in Manitoba, and until I grew up—in fact, until about 1929—I never suspected that it would be impossible to sell wheat. I thought you might be unable to sell gold, but not wheat. It was a terrible thing for Westerners to realize in 1929 that maybe wheat could not be sold. Many men condemn the late Government for their management of the wheat question. Ultimately they came out with a profit. But I am not going into that matter. I am persuaded that when Mr. Bennett and his Government adopted their wheat policy they never dreamed that perhaps ultimately it would be impossible to make sales. And now, as we all know, we have reached the stage when some of our wheat cannot be sold, because the great consuming countries are producing to meet their own requirements. From 75 to 80 per cent of our production cannot now be used in this country. I am persuaded that the time is coming when, because of economic conditions, our own people will have to pay a very much higher price than they have ever paid for Canadian grain, and we shall have to spend large sums of money in finding new uses for wheat.

Ultimately a measure like this will be of no use, because the farmers who are intended