

agriculture this year, especially with regard to certain types of machinery. I believe we shall have to have a larger number of combines. One large combine would have taken the place of approximately twenty of those men who came from eastern Canada. During the last year of the last war wheat was selling in western Canada for \$2.25 a bushel and you could purchase a binder there at that time for \$285. To-day it is worth \$385. A seed drill which then cost approximately \$250 is to-day worth approximately \$400. I believe, and the western farmers believe, that there should be a greater parity between the prices we receive to-day for what we have to sell and the prices we have to pay for the commodities we have to buy. The government's policy of freezing farm prices at levels that obtained between September 15 and October 10, 1941, has, I believe, proven unworkable. In a great many instances it has been necessary to adjust these prices by subsidies. These subsidies in some instances have been paid to the processor of agricultural products. In others they have been paid directly to the farmer, but where they have been paid to the processors it was expected that they would pay a higher price for the product which they were processing.

We in this group do not believe in the principle of subsidies. We believe that the government should appoint commodity boards which would purchase from the farmer the products he has to sell, at cost of production or, if that could not be ascertained easily, at a parity price established on the basis of a period of years in which agriculture has received a proportionate share of the national income. If there were a loss to the government, the commodity board could absorb that loss, and we would not have to set up the bureaucracy which in many instances has been set up in the payment of these subsidies in western Canada. As an example of this I would mention the subsidies paid on the wheat acreage reduction plan. We have in western Canada, according to returns tabled in this house, a list of names of men who were paid for this purpose, and according to that list, there were some six hundred men in the west who were doing this inspection work.

Mr. GARDINER: Six hundred employees.

Mr. WRIGHT: In that particular part of the province which I represent ninety per cent of these men are political appointees, and they are deliberately mixing business with political propaganda. The farmers of Canada have become disgusted with this method of doing business. We had a grain policy announced last Friday by the Minister of Trade

and Commerce (Mr. MacKinnon), and I should like to compliment him upon the promptness with which the government's grain policy has been announced this year. I would suggest, however, that it would have been better had he consulted organized agriculture, as represented by the Canadian Federation of Agriculture, before presenting this policy.

There are some things in the policy with which I do not agree. I believe that the stoppage of payment for storage of grain on the farm is not defensible at this time. The minister gives one reason why the policy was adopted. I submit that there are two other reasons. Statistics show that a considerable amount of storage is not being used in the elevators in western Canada. In many instances this is because certain elevator companies have bins which have been available for, say, No. 4 wheat, but a large quantity of grain in that particular district is No. 3 wheat, and when the farmer comes and asks if there is a bin for No. 3 wheat he is told that there is no space available but that they have a No. 4 bin if he is willing to accept No. 4 for his wheat. As a result of that, there has been a great deal of grain held back in the country. There are also a large number of farmers in the west who desire to use their own facilities in the delivering of their grain, and they are holding their grain back until there is room in the pool elevators at their particular point so that they may deliver their grain through their own system. This legislation, stopping the payment of storage, is forcing these men to deliver their grain through other sources than those which they would like to use, and they are delivering grain at a lower grade than they should obtain.

With regard to prices, may I say that they are far below a parity level. There has been a great deal of misunderstanding in this country as to what is meant by parity prices. In the United States they took the period of 1909-1913 as the period in which agriculture in that country enjoyed an approximately equal place in the division of the national income with labour and industry, and they worked out a basis of parity prices on that period. In Canada a great many organizations have accepted the period 1926-1929 as being the basis on which parity prices should be established in this country. I would point out that during those years agricultural income was only one-sixth of the national income, although one-third of the employable males in Canada during that period were engaged in agriculture. As far as we are concerned we are not prepared to accept that basis. We believe that a period should be chosen in which