

in such cases because the government needed the companies' products. I see no reason why a similar concession could not be made to wheat farmers under present circumstances.

Hon. Mr. Euler: Could such a concession not also be made for home builders, so that human beings, as well as wheat could be properly housed?

Hon. Mr. Aseltine: I am not worried about the housing question. Incidentally, the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation sent its agent to Rosetown to try to persuade the town to build a huge subdivision that we never asked for, and which I for one am not in favour of.

Hon. Mr. Lambert: You might use it to store wheat.

Hon. Mr. Aseltine: I think money could be well spent in providing storage for our wheat, which in my opinion is a very important commodity. It is also my opinion that the piling up of wheat is the direct responsibility of the government.

Hon. Mr. Grant: What about the Great Creator? Was He not in some way responsible for it?

Hon. Mr. Aseltine: In September of 1943 the government took over completely the marketing of wheat in Canada, and this problem of accumulation has come upon us only since the government entered into the picture.

The government's responsibility stems from the agreements which they entered into. They made the British Wheat Agreement, that famous agreement that we talked so much about a few years ago; then they entered into the first International Wheat Agreement, which many of us opposed. Those agreements were made at a time when the price of wheat was high. We argued that the farmers of western Canada suffered great losses because of those agreements; there was some dispute as to the amount, which was placed as high as \$900 million, but I think everyone will agree that the farmers did lose a lot of money.

In my opinion the wheat agreements made by the government have lost us markets. Under that marketing arrangement we sold to Britain at one price, and sold Class 2 wheat to other countries at a different price. The same is true of the first International Wheat Agreement: we sold wheat to members who signed the agreement at a certain price, and at the same time we sold Class 2 wheat to the rest of the world at a higher price. The failure of Great Britain to sign the

second International Wheat Agreement has had a drastic effect on the marketing of Canadian wheat.

The net result of the government's interference in the handling of wheat over the years since 1943 is the loss of markets, reduced prices and a vast accumulation of surplus grain.

Let us look at what is happening elsewhere. Sweden is now exporting wheat to Brazil and Yugoslavia; Turkey is shipping to Germany and Portugal; the United States is selling for sterling, and is ready to barter or give away her surplus crop.

All these things I have mentioned have put the farmers of the prairie provinces in a very difficult position. I noticed in this morning's *Montreal Gazette* an article which I will not read in full, but from which I will quote one paragraph:

Farm Income Dips Sharply In Dominion

Farm income in Canada will drop by 12 per cent in 1953, the second consecutive annual decline from the 1951 peak, federal agricultural economists estimated today.

I do not know whether they had in mind the fact that the farmers will not be able to sell the wheat which is stored up and that therefore their income will be down. At any rate it is down. About 20 per cent of our people are agriculturists, but their share of the national income is only 10 per cent. The farm population is declining: hundreds of thousands are moving to the cities, or are getting work in the mines, where, I am told, they can earn as much as a member of parliament. That is the situation, and, to top it all off, the grain farmers of whom I have spoken are permitted to deliver only three bushels per acre of their cultivated land. What they receive does not provide enough money to pay harvest expenses, store and gasoline bills, and other outgoings; and as a matter of fact many a farmer has not been able to get elevator space for even this limited quota. Yet he has to meet payments on his machinery and provide for his living expenses and the costs of putting in next year's crop. For these reasons the farmer needs an advance on the wheat which is now in storage.

I think I have stated in this house on other occasions that to fully equip an economic farm unit in western Canada costs around twenty thousand dollars. A farm should consist of at least one section, and if possible two sections, because the larger unit can be operated with the same outfit of machinery and equipment as is needed for one section whereas on the smaller farm the equipment is lying idle half the time.