

legislation, and the only reply we could get was that they had the matter under consideration.

We are now in the final stages of the session, and we have seen no indication of any kind of any changes, or any action that may be taken by the government with regard to the marketing of the coming crop. The order paper is now practically clear, and yet we have heard nothing from the government.

Yesterday, however, the government policy was announced—not here in the House of Commons, but on the Winnipeg grain exchange. That is not treating members of parliament fairly. We are sent here to consider important matters connected with marketing, and so on, and we have endeavoured to obtain a statement of policy. It was only proper that any change in policy, or any definite policy should have been announced here, so that hon. members would have had an opportunity to discuss it. This may have been the middle course, however, suggested by one of the cabinet ministers, but in my opinion the first statement should have been made right here in the House of Commons.

Wheat production and problems connected with the marketing of wheat should be considered here. This action by the government, without notice to parliament, has created an unprecedented situation in connection with the marketing of wheat. What have we to-day? We have an open market, so to speak. In Winnipeg we have the announcement that they will not buy wheat. Their agents are definitely instructed not to buy any wheat, and that order took effect immediately. Apparently the wheat board is not functioning properly. When the minister replies, I should like him to tell the house who is really in control of the Canadian wheat board. Where did they get their instructions? Who is dictating their policy?

An uncertainty has been created with regard to prices for the new crop. Some hon. members on this side of the house for two or three weeks have been endeavouring to get a statement from the ministry respecting the handling of the new crop. I say that at this time we should have a definite statement of policy from the minister. That statement could have been given in the budget, because on former occasions that has been done.

The hon. member for Danforth has said that the farmer has been forgotten in the budget. On previous occasions he has not been forgotten. The Minister of Finance (Mr. Ralston) did deal with some matters pertaining to the cost to the country of carrying the wheat, and I say that when he was making that statement, a definite announcement of policy might have been made. We

[Mr. Perley.]

should have an explanation from the minister telling us whether or not there will be any amendment to the Canadian Wheat Board Act. The Minister of Agriculture promised in February, March and April to the people of western Canada that amendments would be made. I am informed further that an announcement of policy was made recently on the grain exchange to the effect that the minister had promised that during this session an amendment would be introduced which would strike out the clause limiting to 5,000 bushels the amount which could be delivered to the board. That is proof that he had in mind some amendments.

We know that the producers in western Canada have asked for full government control. It is not necessary for me to recite now the numerous resolutions which have been passed by different organizations in western Canada, and particularly the great grain handling organizations, such as the pools in the different provinces. They have asked that the government take over full control of marketing of all grain—not only wheat, but coarse grains, too. Then, within the last few months, and particularly since the war broke out, they have asked that the grain exchange should be closed for the duration of the war. At the same time they have asked for a fair price.

I agree with the hon. member for Danforth when he says that the farmers are not asking for anything unreasonable when they ask for fair treatment. They have asked for a fair price, particularly at this time when apparently there is only one market and only one buyer. I say they should know what that price is to be. Why should there be any intermediary between the wheat board and the British buyer? I cannot see why, unless it is to keep that organization in business, and to pay them certain service charges which I do not think they earn. I do not believe those charges are earned, especially when we have a board which is getting all the wheat. I believe great savings could be made in respect of those storage charges.

In the session of 1939 I made what I considered were constructive suggestions, by way of amendments to different bills. I paid particular attention to Bill No. 63, which involved an amendment to the Canadian Wheat Board Act, and fixed the price at 70 cents. On that occasion I suggested a price of 80 cents, and would have gone even further. I made the further suggestion, however, that whether the price was 70 cents or 80 cents, or whatever it might be, there should be added to it each month one cent to encourage the farmer to hold his wheat on his farm. What would that mean? It would mean that much of the storage