

a big crop, and nothing to the man with a crop failure. There is no bonus on coarse grains. The farmer with no crop is out of luck. If there is no change in policy by next spring—

Here is the important point:

—we will have a shift to increased wheat acreage. If I were a farmer I would plant more wheat next year. Why? Because oats are 15 cents a bushel and wheat is between 58 cents and 60 cents. A farmer would be dull if he did not react in this manner; and this is exactly what he is thinking of right now. To make the bonus fair, if it should be necessary in another year, it should be based on the total acres of crop land. In western Canada we have approximately 60,000,000 acres broken up—summerfallow, oats, barley and all crops combined. One dollar an acre on all land broken gives no special emphasis on either oats, barley or wheat. It gives equal emphasis to all, and if wheat is sold at, let us say, a market price of 40 cents the total cost would be the same as this year and probably some wheat would be fed. This wheat is not fed at 60 cents. At a dollar an acre basis it wouldn't cost any more money to the government of Canada. But bonusing the price of wheat prevents the very thing you are trying to do, it does not help to feed any of that surplus. As long as the farmer can get 60 cents for wheat he will not feed wheat to hogs.

The total storage capacity for wheat in Canada is roughly 419,000,000 bushels. If you raise the price of wheat by a guaranteed price out of all proportion to everything else you will stimulate the growing of wheat, and you will make the situation which to-day is difficult even more difficult. I say to my hon. friends of the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation and Social Credit groups and to others who are opposing the amendment to the wheat board act: Is it not better to help the farmer, regardless of whether he grows wheat or anything else, than to help him only if he grows wheat and encourage him to grow more and more wheat until you have your elevators plugged and you cannot do anything with the wheat?

Mr. COLDWELL: The wheat board bill limits it to 5,000 bushels.

Mr. TUCKER: I do not see what that has to do with my argument being wrong. If you limit it to 5,000 bushels, you do not encourage them to grow more wheat because you say, "We are paying only on 5,000 bushels, there is a 5,000 bushel limitation."

At one time I considered advocating that the proper thing to do was to leave the price at 60 cents and give a far more generous acreage allowance than that proposed and thus get away from encouraging the growing of wheat. Here is the thought which struck me in that connection and which I think should be considered. There are certain areas in Canada

[Mr. Tucker.]

which probably would not benefit from an acreage bonus scheme. Then there is this other consideration. If we give all the necessary assistance for people to live comfortably, whether or not they are growing wheat, and let the price of wheat go down to 40 cents, the tendency might be that we would not grow enough wheat to hold our share of the world market. Once we lost our share of the world market, we might have difficulty in regaining it. I think we should keep the price high enough to encourage the growing of sufficient wheat to retain our place in the world market.

There is another point to be considered. If we bonused the western farmer on an acreage basis entirely and let the price go down to ruinous depths, he would be forced to go more and more into the production of dairy products and beef and pork products. As a member from western Canada, am I justified in asking for that policy? The effect would be that the western farmer would turn into heavy production of dairy products and live stock and drive down the prices of his eastern brother farmer's products. I decided that this would be most unfair, and so I take my present attitude in common with many Liberal members from western Canada. I regard it as a fair compromise—70 cents and the acreage bonus scheme.

Taking everything together, the fairest thing to do for the farmers of the east and the west was, in addition to providing for this acreage bonus, to put the price of wheat high enough that we could hope to hold our own in world markets; to encourage the western farmer to stay substantially in the growing of wheat; and also to extend the policy of a guaranteed initial price for wheat to farmers in the rest of Canada. That, it seemed to me, was a compromise which took into consideration all the factors, and I defy any member of the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation or of the Social Credit party to meet the arguments I have advanced and show how their policy would meet the objections I have raised and the objectives mentioned which I think should be kept in mind.

In regard to the effect of the western farmer being forced by low wheat prices to turn his attention to mixed farming, as would happen if the policy advocated by some of our friends from eastern Canada were adopted, and how important it is that the western farmer should be encouraged to stay substantially in the growing of wheat, I quote the opinion of Hon. Mr. Taggart, minister of agriculture of Saskatchewan, who is regarded, it will be admitted by all, as one of the out-