

to devote most of my attention to one paragraph in the speech from the throne which deals with western conditions. It says in part:

My ministers have had under anxious consideration the means by which an orderly marketing of the wheat crop of western Canada may be assured, and have already taken such effective action towards that end as the circumstances appear to justify.

Reading that sentence, I am led to believe that the government are not fully aware of the conditions that do exist in western Canada. The speech continues:

My ministers are aware that changing conditions in the world's markets may necessitate further intervention by my government, which is prepared to render whatever additional assistance may be deemed advisable in the national interest.

I am led by that sentence, Mr. Speaker, to take heart. It may be that the government has not been kept fully aware of the changing conditions. Then the speech proceeds:

The present situation has emphasized the necessity of effecting a reduction in the costs of production and marketing of the wheat crop and of providing more stable markets, as the welfare of all parts of Canada is involved in satisfactory returns being received by the grain growers.

I feel it my duty, sir, to bring to your attention and to the attention of the house the prices which are received to-day by the grain growers. The following figures are taken from the Calgary Herald of March 13, and are street prices, or the prices paid for grain delivered at the line company elevators in Alberta at points taking the 26 cent freight rate to Fort William:

Wheat: No. 1, 36 cents; No. 2, 33 cents; No. 3, 29 cents; No. 4, 25 cents; No. 5, 23 cents; No. 6, 23 cents per bushel.

Oats: No. 2 CW, 15 cents per bushel.

That is the highest grade.

No. 1 feed oats, 10 cents per bushel.

Barley: No. 3 CW, 14 cents; No. 4 CW, 11 cents per bushel.

Rye: No. 2 CW, 12 cents; No. 3 CW, 10 cents per bushel.

I am sure that no one would consider these prices satisfactory. In fact they are so unsatisfactory that I think it is impossible to have stable business conditions in Canada until they are changed. May I give to the house one or two instances of the wrong relationship of prices that now exists? A few weeks ago a gentleman told me that it took five bushels of his wheat to pay for the half-soling of his boy's shoes; that was No. 2 grade wheat. I heard of another case where a man took 60 bushels of barley to pay for a pair of workshoes for himself. I know of a man who, having brought eleven dozen

eggs to town and succeeded in getting a dollar for them, thought he had made a good deal. He had his boy with him and they went over to the restaurant to get their lunch. It cost him 90 cents for the two meals. With the remaining 10 cents he bought a pair of shoelaces for the boy. Even at that there was nothing to pay for the gasoline which he used in driving to town and back again. It takes just 75 bushels of No. 1 feed oats to buy a pair of ploughshares. One man told me that when the present Minister of Railways was in western Canada during the campaign he was lamenting the fact that it took two bushels of barley to buy a package of cigarettes at some place in Manitoba, but this man said to me, "When you go to Ottawa now tell him that in our district it takes three bushels of barley to buy a package of cigarettes."

The result of these low prices, Mr. Speaker, is that the morale of the western farmer never has been as low as it is to-day, and that is not to be wondered at. Out of the prices which I quoted must be deducted all the expenses of the farmer, including threshing, the hauling of grain to town, stooking, twine, the board of his harvesters, repairs to his binder and all the expenses which must have gone before in preparing the land for the crop. As a result he is unable, in many cases, to pay his store bills, his taxes, or the interest on his mortgage or bank loan. I have here a clipping from the Calgary Herald containing a despatch from Edmonton which says that the Retail Merchants' Association of that province interviewed the provincial government, and they stated that the total amount owing the merchants of the province on farmers' accounts was estimated at \$40,000,000. I was told a few years ago that there were 70,000 farmers in Alberta, so anyone can figure out just how much that averages out for each farmer on his store debt.

Many of our farmers are in this position: They are depending upon a tractor with which to do their seeding operations this spring, but they have not the money left with which to buy gasoline or oil to run the tractor, and in many cases credit has been absolutely refused. How is the crop to be put in this spring? That is the burning question, and I hope this house and this government will consider it before the end of this month. I was told by one gentleman that a bank manager expressed the opinion to him that in his particular district one-third of the land would not be seeded this spring because the farmers could not get credit with which to go ahead with their farming operations. I know of one school district,