

make his plans now. If he knows that he is not going to be given any sort of assistance wherewith to build storage facilities on his farm, he has to put in just that much less wheat, and he cannot provide crop insurance of the type I have suggested.

Figures supplied by the bureau of statistics indicate clearly that the cost of living in Canada is rising and has been rising since the beginning of the war, without even one setback. I must confess that I was amazed to see the Minister of Agriculture and other hon. members occupying the Liberal benches rise to defend the amount of money which is being spent for the wheat farmers. The defence which is required is, not against the amount of money which is being spent—and which, as I have informed the committee, is much less than it was last year—but against the indignant wheat farmer who wants to know why his income is being cut by at least \$85,000,000 at a time when the national income is going up, when the costs of living are rising, when—in particular—the province of Saskatchewan is receiving less for its agricultural products, proportionately, than any other province of Canada. The table which the Minister of Agriculture placed on *Hansard* on March 27 indicates that very clearly indeed.

What we are asking for is not a matter of charity as was suggested the other day by, I believe, the hon. member for Wellington North when he made some reference to a person coming to his door for a meal. In view of the fact that the government is purchasing all this wheat, that the farmer cannot sell his wheat on the open market, that the amount is limited to 230,000,000 bushels whether he sells it on the open market or to the wheat board, and that the government has indicated a desire that people should continue to grow wheat—in a limited quantity, I admit—not only for purposes of domestic consumption, but in order to provide a storehouse for Britain in the great struggle in which she is engaged, and to sell to Europe when this great conflict is over, I submit there should be a fair price for what is sold.

Furthermore—as also was suggested the other day by the Minister of Agriculture—we are less able to sell our wheat because the British empire is at war. We are blockaded, but we are asked to continue to produce a certain amount of wheat so that when the blockade ends we can sell wheat to Europe. I say that this is not a matter of charity. We are producing a product, a source of wealth, the government wants production of this article, and it should be prepared to pay a reasonable price for it.

It seems to me that the government should adopt with respect to wheat the same policy

which it pursues towards industry, namely, that the labourer is worthy of his hire and should be paid accordingly, and, even if it is constrained to reduce acreage as drastically as is being done, it should provide a reasonable price per bushel for the amount to be purchased—based, as has been suggested many times in this chamber, upon a parity with respect to the things which the farmer has to buy. Industry is not asked to take a loss; why, then, should the wheat farmer be asked to do so?

Time and time again it has been admitted in this house that the production of food-stuffs is a war industry. On this point I should like to quote from the statement which was made by the Minister of Agriculture in this chamber on November 14, 1940, as reported at page 96 of *Hansard*:

Perhaps one of the greatest war services provided in Canada has been performed by the farmers. I think the remarks of the different oppositions agree with that. We are inclined to look upon munitions, arms and armies as being indispensable in war time, and they are; but sometimes we forget that the necessities of peace time are the fundamental requirements of war time. Food and clothing are as indispensable in time of war as man-power itself, because without food and clothing there could be no man-power.

The farmers of Canada and the enlisted soldiers from all classes in Canada have been required to make greater economic sacrifices than any others. First it was the apple growers, next the tobacco growers, next the vegetable and small fruit growers; and now the wheat growers have been compelled, because of the turn of the war, to accept much less for their products than they had every right and reason to expect. Farmers suffered as great, if not greater, losses because of war fear before war was declared.

That was last fall, before this policy was enunciated.

Industry and business related to wheat appear to be very well looked after. It is admitted by the Minister of Trade and Commerce that at least \$50,000,000 will be required to carry for the year 1941-42 the wheat owned by the Canadian government. This outlay represents storage charges of the elevators, and is in respect of an estimated obligation of \$400,000,000. In other words, in order to carry \$400,000,000 of an obligation we have to pay in one year \$50,000,000, or one-eighth of the total obligation and this is entirely exclusive of interest, or outstanding bank balances, or handling charges.

So far as I know it has never been suggested by the government that the elevator companies should not receive a fair return for their services and for the capital they have invested. It has been suggested, however, by hon. members on both sides that they are paid to-day more than a reasonable return for these