

their machinery, which should be and would be paid for if the farmers had a chance to deliver their grain.

What is being done to take care of this serious situation? Only a few days ago we learned that the Alberta Debt Adjustment Act was ruled *ultra vires* by the privy council. I believe the other western provinces, and some of the eastern provinces as well, are in the same position as we are. I wonder what the situation will be before we can get modern judges, trained in the up-to-date modern school, who will give the proper interpretation to the legislation that comes before them. Something must be done. Last session I stated, and I repeat it now, that the President of the United States found it necessary to put progressive judges on the bench before any advance could be made with progressive legislation.

There is another question which will have to be considered before agriculture can get on a sound footing; that is the present farm debt situation. I am not like some people in talking about this; I know of what I speak, because in my own case I bought quite a bit of land when wheat was selling at from \$1.40 to \$1.70 a bushel, and I had to do work outside of the farm, in different lines, in order to keep up my payments. This is nothing new in western Canada, because under our price structure the farmers have not been able to pay for their farms, and for that reason have been compelled to carry on other remunerative work during their slack seasons. Now principal and interest have piled up to such an extent that the farmers can never get out from under the load; and while plenty of good suggestions are offered, no attempt is made to remove that burden which must be lifted before the farmer can make progress.

In connection with hog and cattle prices, while they are not just what they might be we have not yet received very many complaints about them. But there is a good deal of discontent in connection with the grading of hogs. As usual the packers seem to get the larger share of the melon, and we are wondering how long it will be until this matter is straightened out. Then in connection with the price of eggs, in my part of the country we had a reduction of 17 cents per dozen during the three weeks period prior to January 15. I wonder what the wartime prices and trade board is doing about that. On January 15 the temperature went down to 58 below zero in my district, and I think the Minister of Finance or the chairman of the wartime prices and trade board would have to go out there with a new mash or some-

[Mr. Fair.]

thing of the kind to make the chickens lay in order to produce with a price reduction of 17 cents a dozen as compared to the previous price. I should like to have a good deal more to say on that question, and perhaps the opportunity will come later.

I do not see why the farmers, together with all the help they can get, and their families, should be compelled to work longer hours than any other class in this country and still get such a miserable standard of living. Time after time we have been told by the Prime Minister and others that we must have an equal standard, but I am still waiting and hoping for the day when some government will be put into power here that will do a little levelling up and bring about a fair distribution in this country. Time and again we have asked that representatives of organized agriculture be placed on boards dealing with agricultural matters. Up to the present we have not had much success in having that done, so that again to-day I am offering this suggestion to the government.

I have not time to deal with a number of other questions to which I wanted to refer, but I should like to take up one which I believe is of particular interest to the whole of Canada, since now we are telling the men serving in this war what we are going to do for them when they come back. I am going to mention some figures to show what the men who served in the last war have been done for, not what has been done for them. I am referring again to the soldier settlement board. After the last war, in order to put some of the returned men to work and perhaps to keep them out of mischief, the soldier settlement board was set up; I believe that was about 1919. Originally the number of settlers under that scheme was 25,017; the government advanced loans to the amount of \$109,034,331, and I believe the rate of interest was 5 per cent. Up to the end of March, 1941, collections on those loans amounted to \$65,640,518. In other words it took about twenty-two years for the government to get back some \$65,000,000 of the original \$109,000,000, and included in that figure were the deposits or payments made on land which was resold to civilians after the soldier settlers got wise and left. Only 2,750 settlers have obtained title to the land, and a number of these had pensions or a little stake obtained from other sources. On March 31, 1941, according to the figures I have here, of the original number of settlers only some 7,360 remained on the land. Of those, 2,953 had an average equity of 67.5 per cent; 606 had an average equity of 32 per cent; 1,078 had an average equity of