

in a condition of distress. The matter is not one to be dealt with lightly and it is one which reflects upon this Government that while this condition of affairs exists, and while there are thousands of people in this country who are growing poorer and poorer as a result of this war, the Government does nothing. Do I say the Government does nothing? Not exactly that—it does nothing but appoint commissions and have its members interviewed by the news papers, telling the people what the Government is doing in order to ascertain whether or not the cost of living is too great. Let me, even now, implore the Government to take effective measures, to take control of the flour mills of the country, to take control of the transportation business of the country.

Mr. CROTHERS: Would it do for us to fix the price of wheat to the farmers?

Mr. PUGSLEY: I have no objection to that whatever.

Mr. MEDERIC MARTIN: There is no necessity for that in Montreal or in the other cities of Canada. If you do that you will enrich the farmer to the detriment of the rest of the people. You are looking for votes.

Mr. PUGSLEY: I think there would be no objection for the Government to take control of the price of wheat provided they do as Lloyd George's Government has done, namely, guarantee to the farmers a minimum price for their wheat because thereby the production would be increased. But what is the use to-day of the western farmer increasing his production when up to a few days ago when this Order in Council was passed granting free wheat, the farmer has not been able to get his produce out to market, because it is a fact that to-day every elevator in the Canadian West is filled with grain? It is an open secret that millions of bushels are still in the hands of the farmers as they are not able to get their grain to market. I was told the other day of a man who had ten thousand bushels of grain in one of the districts of western Canada which he is not able to dispose of because he cannot get cars to take it to the market, and that is the case with thousands of farmers in the West.

Mr. CROTHERS: Would my hon. friend suggest that we should fix the price of potatoes for the farmers of New Brunswick?

[Mr. Pugsley.]

Mr. PUGSLEY: I have no objection whatever.

Mr. CROTHERS: We want the farmers of New Brunswick to hear that.

Mr. PUGSLEY: Let the Government do exactly what the British Government has done, namely, fix the price of potatoes for a term of years, having reference to the cost of production. If that is done, the patriotic farmers of New Brunswick will be heart and soul with the Government and a reduction will be affected in the cost of living. Reference has been made to Australia. Let us consider for a moment how differently the Australian Government deals with the farmer from the way in which this Government does. The Australian Government realises that the farmer cannot raise produce without fertilizer or without machinery. I do not know as to the tariff on machinery in Australia, but I am told that it is very much lower than in this country. On the Government railroads in Australia fertilizer is carried absolutely free for the farmers in order that they may get it as cheaply as possible, whereas in this country the farmers have to pay the highest possible price for their fertilizer. Let us take the case of farm tractors, with one of which a farmer can plough in a day as many acres as he can with a large number of horses and men, and at very much less expense. As was well shown to-day by my hon. friend from West Kent (Mr. McCoig), this Government is charging 27½ per cent duty on the value of farm tractors, and yet the farmer is asked to increase production, and the Government is asking the people to believe that it is giving encouragement to the farmers. There is a duty upon fertilizer, and when it was proposed to impose this increased duty of 7½ per cent as a war tax, it took all the pressure which it was possible for members on this side of the House, assisted by agricultural societies throughout the country, to bring to bear upon this Government in order to get it to do away with the tax which it was proposing to put upon fertilizers. Has the Government done anything to give to the farmers of Canada fertilizer at a low price? Was the Government not aware that to-day not a pound of potash could be bought in the whole Dominion of Canada, although it is a fertilizer which is most essential to the farmers and the lack of which makes it necessary for him to secure some other kind of fertilizer in regard to which he ought to have Government assistance?