

our old friend supply and demand, which will be the classical variable. Then after straightening things out in this particular industry and that particular industry we can begin to work on parities as between different commodities. If wheat is worth \$1.55 per bushel, how much is an eight foot binder worth, or a six tube radio, or a pair of shoes? Once we have decided what the common denominator is we can get pretty close to equivalent values.

The really difficult ones will be those that are not quite so tangible. For instance, what are a medical doctor's services worth, (a) if you die; (b) if you don't die; (c) if you get better but wish you had died? What is a lawyer's advice worth (a) if it is good; (b) if it isn't? What are the services of a minister of the crown worth, (a) if he is a Liberal; (b) if he is a Conservative? We may after all have to be a bit arbitrary about some of these things.

Seriously, to get back into agriculture, my farmer friends are satisfied that \$1.35 per bushel for four years is a reasonable and stable income. What they may think about it if the prices of other things are allowed to go up sky-high is something else. I have not quite understood a lot of the criticism that the price is so much below the world price. As the \$1.35 is an average price spread over a number of years, how is it possible to tell whether the price is good or bad until the four years have passed and the average can be computed? Anything else is merely conjecture or guesswork and may prove to be badly wrong. The farmer knows he will get \$1.35 and if he feels he cannot produce wheat for that price he has the opportunity of quitting and directing his energies into some other channel. Also with the further assurance that the wheat board will buy all the wheat that will be grown during the term of the contract the great fear of being left with a large quantity on his hands has disappeared.

May I now be allowed to discuss for a short time a matter which has not been brought up in this house or if at all, then not for a considerable time. Every year about this time we see in the newspapers what are called estimates of the amount of grain which will be grown in Canada. May I suggest that this guesswork is no help at all to the agricultural industry but is, on the contrary, quite detrimental? In the first place, the guess is never accurate, or even nearly accurate; in the second place, it is invariably too high—I could say with reasonable safety always too high. In the third place, the principle or the practice of telling the world how much wheat or oats or barley or rye or anything else may be expected from

our growers in any given year, especially when the estimate is too high, is a bad one and is a great disservice to the farmers of the country.

Let us first consider the matter of accuracy. Hon. members will bear me out when I say that two or three guesses are made during the year. They are all different, and they are practically always adjusted on a descending scale. The first guess for 1947 may be expected any time now. Before seeding is finished, we shall read that John Jones, the famous maker of fur-lined refrigerators, in his journey from Montreal to Vancouver, said in an interview that his observations led him to believe that the prospects for a bumper crop all across Canada were never brighter. There could not possibly be less than 500 million bushels of wheat, and coarse grains would be grown in like degree. Unfortunately, because John Jones spends a lot of money on advertising, this foolish statement of his gets big headlines. Even now nobody knows for sure how many acres have been planted to wheat, but a small thing like that does not deter the publication of the second guess. Now we are getting closer. A number of organizations who have agents out in the country are getting into the game. By now it is known that the weather has been unfavourable, perhaps dry and windy, or there have been late frosts. Cutworms and grasshoppers have taken their toll. Root-rot and browning have cut the stands considerably. They are still guessing at the acreage, because no one but the farmer himself knows exactly what has been planted. So the third inaccurate guess is made—300 millions.

Then a newspaper, in a moment of enthusiasm, sends out someone from its city office to drive all over the grain-growing provinces, to put the finishing touches on the guesses. But, Mr. Speaker, the farmer owner himself, who has walked into his grain fields a hundred times already this season, and who knows where the thin places are, and whether the heads are large or small, whether they are well filled or just half filled, still does not know what the yield will be. If after threshing he finds that his guess was within one and a half bushels per acre, then he knows that he was an excellent estimator. Yet this guess, according to the Year Book 1944, would produce an error of 35 million bushels in the total crop estimate for wheat alone. But the man driving along the country roads in a good car at forty or fifty miles an hour, seeing perhaps the best crop, perhaps the worst, is acknowledged to be able to say what the harvest will be.