

responsible for all of these things. However, I have not been convinced of that—not yet, at any rate. I give the credit to the Creator.

You will gather, honourable senators, that I am leading up to a speech on wheat, and it is on that subject that I intend to make my chief remarks. First of all, though, I want to say that food is one of the most important products in the world, if not the most important. The population of the world is increasing by 25 million a year and it is going to require a lot of food to keep that population alive and in good health.

There is no food like wheat. You can store wheat in a bin or granary or elevator, and keep it there for years and years and years, and if it is safely housed and dry, it will sprout and grow crops when eventually planted; or if it is ground into flour, that flour will be just as good as can be made from freshly-harvested wheat. In fact, wheat was found in King Tut's tomb in Egypt when it was opened up. At Athabaska Landing, Alberta, a few years ago I was talking to a farmer who had won the top award for wheat at one of the big fairs. Pointing to a field of wheat, he said, "That has been grown from wheat which some person gave me, saying it came from the tomb of King Tut, who died some 3,200 years ago". The farmer's wheat had very long heads and long beards and an Egyptian appearance, but of course I do not want you to think I was gullible enough to believe his story. However, the fact remains that wheat can be kept a very long time and still be perfectly sound and fit for food.

Honourable senators probably know that we had an exceptionally large wheat crop in 1951, the largest crop we ever harvested in 1952, and, as previously stated, we have a crop of some 550 million bushels of wheat this year. The wheat has been piling up, with the result that we have at the present time a crisis. It is, in my opinion, not a minor crisis, but a major crisis in wheat.

**Some Hon. Senators:** Hear, hear.

**Hon. Mr. Aseltine:** The storage available in Canada for wheat—and I think the honourable Senator from Churchill (Hon. Mr. Crerar) will be able to bear me out in this—at terminals, at the lakehead and in the interior, amounts to 541 million bushels. All storage space was full before the 1953 harvest of some 550 million bushels of wheat and huge quantities of coarse grains, with the result that wheat has been piled up in every direction. Despite the fact that some of it has moved since harvest time, the elevators and granaries on the farms are all full and we still have on hand in elevators

and on the farms some 900 million to a billion bushels. Our seed wheat and domestic requirements for Canada over the next year will probably be between 160 million and 200 million bushels, leaving 700 or 800 million bushels to be disposed of, if the farmers are to carry on.

Our first problem is to find safe storage for the wheat on hand. An example of the seriousness of the problem is one pile in the province of Alberta near the home of my honourable friend from Calgary (Hon. Mr. Ross), of 100,000 bushels; and I could mention other piles varying from 5,000 bushels to 10,000 bushels. This grain is lying on the ground, exposed to the weather, with nothing under it or over it. The farmers have first to face the problem of storage, if they are to save this year's crop.

As I have said before, the population of the world is increasing; and with the possibility that next year we may not have a good crop, and perhaps the year after that, it is vitally important that this year's abundant harvest does not spoil. Therefore, our first and foremost problem is to see that our wheat is properly housed.

Some persons have suggested that additional internal elevators like the ones at Saskatoon and Moose Jaw should be constructed. But that would be a slow process: the wheat that is now on the ground could spoil while additional elevators were being constructed. It has been urged by others that we should use the airport hangars which are not in use. There are, I know, a number of them in Saskatchewan in which wheat could be properly stored.

In times gone by when there was a surplus, the elevators would permit farmers to dump their grain on the ground beside the elevators, and as soon as a car came in that grain was loaded into it and shipped out. That arrangement might relieve the situation today, but the Canada Grain Act makes it an offence. Any change in that regard would require an amendment to the Act, and I do not advise it.

My suggestion is that the farmers should be encouraged to build granaries to take care of their wheat crop. I believe a great many farmers would undertake to provide such storage if the income tax department allowed them to write off the cost at a rate of 25 per cent to 50 per cent a year. Honourable senators will recall that during the war years certain big corporations, such as the Aluminum Company of Canada Limited, were encouraged to expand and were allowed to write off the cost of expansion at the rate of 50 per cent a year. A concession was made