

pointed out that there is some improvement in the price level, but generally speaking such improvement is not sufficient to be of any particular value in improving the employment situation or the general business conditions throughout the country.

From time to time I see statements published by the statistical branch of the Department of Trade and Commerce indicating that there have been tremendous improvements in economic conditions in Canada. I believe the whole scheme adopted by this government for the purpose of improving prices and improving economic conditions in Canada has up to date been a dismal failure. It is quite true that considerable quantities of lumber have been sold during the present year under the empire agreements, but they have been sold at prices which brought no profits to the producers; on the contrary those sales entailed very heavy losses. It is to be hoped that under manufacturing, wage and other prevailing conditions the cut which will be processed this summer may produce better results than the stocks on hand which had to be sold under depressed circumstances.

It is needless to describe the condition of agriculture. A carry-over of more than 200 million bushels of wheat hangs like a black cloud over the markets of the world. No matter what kind of marketing board the minister sets up, there can be no decided increase in wheat prices and the condition of the wheat farmer will not be greatly improved until, as pointed out by one hon. member, some disposition of this carry-over takes place. I am inclined to agree with the statement of the hon. member who preceded me (Mr. Ilsley) that perhaps in an attempt on the part of certain bodies in Canada to control prices we had the beginning of our difficulties in connection with wheat. To some extent this government is reaping the results of those attempts. I know that as far back as 1929 very serious reports were coming from Great Britain with respect to this matter. We were bound to lose some of the markets we formerly enjoyed for the sale of this very important commodity; I shall not go into details in that connection. No doubt the government made a laudable attempt to prevent an absolute breakdown in the purchasing of our grain, but at the same time there does appear to have been an attempt to keep prices in Canada slightly beyond world prices, a procedure which in my opinion—and I may be wrong—seems to have had the effect of piling up this surplus from year to year. I do not agree with the statement that we cannot sell wheat, or that we cannot sell more wheat than we are selling. We certainly will not sell wheat

[Mr. C. A. Stewart.]

if we are not willing to take goods in return. I was shocked to-day upon receiving a statement from some of my friends from western Canada who of necessity must import goods. When I saw the details as to the duty, sales and excise tax, and other charges that were paid, and found that duties amounted to more than one-half of the purchase price of the article, it was clear to me that these people would not purchase abroad again. Every time we Canadians refuse to purchase abroad we narrow the opportunity to sell our goods abroad. If we will not buy, we cannot sell. We are frequently told in this house that foreign countries are refusing to take our grain, but I believe that if the Minister of Trade and Commerce (Mr. Stevens), who is a good trader, were given power to say that Canada is willing to take goods from countries that formerly took our wheat, we could make a trade to-day that would mean a great deal to the wheat growers and farmers of western Canada. I am confident of that despite the fact that we are often told in this house that European countries are producing more wheat than they ever did. That is true, but at the same time they have been using our grain for mixing purposes and selling their own lower grades, and I believe that they would be willing again to deal with us on a fair and equitable basis. But we cannot expect that if we continue the imposts on imports that have been levied by this government.

I know some of the precautions that have been taken by this government to prevent the importation even of empire goods. That is very much to be deplored. The British market is the one market we have left for our western producers, but day by day we see it slipping away from us. What is a marketing board going to be able to do in promoting the sale of our products in Great Britain if at the same time there is a feeling in Great Britain, as there undoubtedly is, that they are not getting a square deal from Canada in the matter of imposts upon British goods coming into this country? Such imposts can have nothing but a deterrent effect on trade even within the empire, and of course countries outside the empire are going to trade with countries that are willing to trade with them.

I believe, however, that both for our export and for our domestic business a marketing board properly constituted would be very helpful in the marketing of our natural products. I agree absolutely with everything the Minister of Agriculture said to-night with respect to the spread between what the producer receives and what the consumer pays.