

the residents of western Canada, even at this time when its value in dollars and cents is so low. To me it is astounding that we should receive the report from the Winnipeg grain exchange stating that it was under request of this government that the action referred to was taken, and that it should be done in that manner rather than that we as members of the House of Commons should first be informed of this action by the Minister of Trade and Commerce (Mr. MacKinnon) or by the Prime Minister (Mr. Mackenzie King). It seems to me that as members of parliament we have a responsibility, and that information might at least have been given to us, if not discussed with us, instead of being broadcast across this country as was done yesterday.

In discussing wheat we must remember that by far the greatest part of mankind is still engaged in agriculture; further that the income from wheat farming is the greatest single contributor to world agricultural income, and finally that the price of wheat exerts a stronger influence on agricultural prices in general than any other individual agricultural price. We have at present a huge surplus of unsold wheat in Canada. On the 25th of this month it was 279 million bushels. At this date a year ago it was only 106 million bushels. It is a vast carryover that we have in prospect at the end of the coming crop year. At this time I think we should certainly have a statement from the government as to the handling of the 1939 wheat crop and also the policy in regard to the bountiful harvest now in sight for 1940.

In my opinion agriculture is suffering more at this time from what might be termed a lopsided development in this country than anything else. The Sirois commission report stated that from 1896 to 1913 under a vigorous immigration policy by the government of the day, assisted by land companies and railway companies, a tremendous expansion took place on the territories of Canada. Settlement took place without discrimination. The territory settled grew from about ten million acres to some seventy million acres in that period. The production of wheat was increased from approximately 20 million bushels to some 210 million bushels during that period, and of course since that time it has been almost doubled again. Hon. members may recollect that at that time no encouragement was given to industrialists and tradesmen to come to this country and develop industry to any great extent. I need not point out that we probably have greater natural resources undeveloped in this dominion than any other nation in the world. We have great facilities for the development of industries. If in this country there had been a balanced programme of

[Mr. J. A. Ross.]

immigration and development, probably we would not now be facing this problem of how to dispose of our wheat. I should like to refer to an article which appeared in the *Labour Gazette* of December, 1937, which points out that the family of the average industrial employee consumes agricultural products to the extent of \$409.35 annually. These products are listed as follows:

	Per year
Animal products	
Beef, different grades	\$40 25
Veal	7 75
Mutton	12 02
Pork, leg and salt	33 02
Bacon (breakfast)	16 43
Pure lard	17 58
Poultry and dairy products	
Eggs, fresh and storage	41 65
Butter, dairy and creamery	49 55
Cheese, old and new	24 13
Milk	34 32
Prairie products	
Bread	57 04
Flour (family)	23 40
Rolled oats	15 34
"Truck" products	
Beans	6 14
Apples, evaporated	8 27
Potatoes	16 48
Prunes	5 98

I think in this country we should have good reason to expect a population of fifty or sixty million. If we had an additional ten million employees in industry, on the basis of this article their consumption of agricultural products at prevailing prices would amount to over four billion dollars annually, which would more than take care of the agricultural problem we are facing to-day.

Farmers are suffering as a result of events over which they have had no control. Farming is a business of many hazards. During the past twenty years wheat prices on this continent have varied from \$3.18 to 33 cents a bushel. Rainfall has varied from practically nothing in some districts to forty inches in other districts during one season. Insect pests have taken a toll amounting to millions of dollars. I often wonder whether Canada as a whole realizes the debt it owes to agriculture, especially during these last few years of depression. Farm production goes on year after year, with little regard to whether or not that production represents a profitable enterprise for the farmer.

Agriculture differs from industry. In 1932, when Canada was in the midst of the worst economic storm of its history, the farms of western Canada produced a wheat crop of 423 million bushels. The production of that large crop at that time and its subsequent handling by our railway systems, its financing from the time it left the farms until it was sold for export, and the economic activity which it generated, constituted a major