

these discussions I have always had the feeling that it carried a minimum of enlightenment to our parliamentary members as a whole and to a very large proportion of the Canadian electorate outside of Parliament.

Possibly one of the reasons for such an impression is that those of us who discuss bills of this kind are apt to miss a broad national perspective of our problem; to put it in another popular phrase, we are very often apt to lose sight of the forest in trying to count all the trees in it.

I do not mean by that to imply any criticism of or reflection on the presentation of this bill either here or in the other house. As a matter of fact, the honourable senator from Rosetown (Hon. Mr. Asetline) who presented this bill on behalf of the Government, is by virtue of his intimate experience and knowledge of the production and marketing of grain in his own part of the country thoroughly qualified to discuss the provisions of this bill and all their implications. He not only operates grain-growing farms himself, and at this time has no less than 50,000 bushels of unmarketed wheat in storage bins on his farms, but he also has intimate contact in an advisory capacity with many smaller farmers throughout his district in connection with their financial and business problems.

Similarly, I might say that the honourable senator from Churchill (Hon. Mr. Crerar), who spoke last evening on this subject, has had a much wider and more accurate contact with grain growers in western Canada, where he has lived for over fifty years, than I could possibly have.

Let me say at once that I am sure there is no disposition here, as indeed there was none in the House of Commons, to oppose the principle of this bill.

I had the privilege, in April last, before the dissolution of Parliament, to sponsor in this house on behalf of the Government of that day the bill already referred to as the Prairie Grain Producers Interim Financing Act, which provided for guaranteed bank loans to western farmers on the security of their unmarketed grain stored on farms. The bill before the house today will provide advances to the same farmers on the security of the Canadian Wheat Board. While this bill differs from the one that was passed last April, I submit that in principle it is aiming at the same object of giving temporary relief to the farmers who have quantities of grain stored on their farms and which they find it impossible to market or to realize upon at this time.

I do not propose to discuss the technique of the bill involving as it does the position of the country elevator agents, the banks,

the use of wheat board permits, cash tickets and storage tickets, and the possible application of prior lien notes against farmers. In my opinion, this legislation must be viewed as temporary emergency legislation, just in the same way as the former Government viewed similar legislation which I had the duty of presenting at the end of the last session.

The all important point which arises out of this kind of bill is how long the problem of grain marketing will be treated in this way. The economy of our whole country is surely involved in this question, and I submit that we have not yet done much more than temporize with it. For over 55 years now the Canadian Grain Act has represented the country's system of collecting grain and transporting the western farmer's grain to market. Twice in the historic crises of Canada's experience has the administration of that act been interrupted. In both cases the interruption has been caused by war and economic depression. At both times when the disruption of international machinery for serving normal requirements of the trading world occurred it became necessary for the Government of Canada to establish wheat boards to take charge of the marketing of our grain, instead of leaving it to the private and cooperative grain trade operating under the old Canada Grain Act in a free, open world market. Owing to the continued disruption of the world's economy, which was intensified by World War II, the Canadian Wheat Board has continued to direct the marketing of grain, both domestically and internationally. The Board of Grain Commissioners still administers the Canada Grain Act, but within limited scope as compared with pre-war days when the world markets were open and free competition was a controlling factor.

In connection with this bill, it is worth while emphasizing that while the Wheat Board, representing the Government, is the guarantor and financial backer in respect to farm stored grain, the Board of Grain Commissioners is still responsible for the administration of the laws and regulations which control the operations of country elevators and the position of the country elevator agent in relation thereto. In so far as the application of this legislation is concerned, therefore, the country elevator agent is going to be in the rather unenviable position of having two official bosses, as well as a third private boss in the person of his company, which owns the elevator and pays his salary and expenses. That is all by the way.

Turning again to the question of a basic solution of the grain marketing problem, I