

of the wheat crop, and of providing more stable markets, as the welfare of all parts of Canada is involved in satisfactory returns being received by the grain growers.

I am pleased to see that the government of the day recognizes that the welfare of Canada as a whole is wrapped up in the prosperity of the three prairie provinces.

I listened yesterday with a great deal of interest to the speech of the hon. member for Regina (Mr. Turnbull), but after hearing his remarks I came to the conclusion that it was possibly such members as he that the government of the day had called into consultation before preparing the speech from the throne. Although this hon. member is a western man and should know the conditions existing in that part of the country, he said "they were bad only in spots." I have lived in western Canada for twenty-three years and have gone through some very serious times, particularly during periods of deflation, but I have never seen anything like the conditions existing at the present time. The hon. member would have been closer to the truth if he had stated that conditions were good in spots. Then he said that conditions were not as bad as they might be. If they were any worse than they are, then God help western Canada. He concluded his remarks by stating that a feeling of hopefulness was coming over the people. Perhaps the hon. member has the advantage, or it may be the disadvantage of living in the city of Regina. That spirit of hopefulness may be coming over those in his own particular legal calling, but that feeling certainly does not exist in the hearts of those following the great industry of agriculture.

If I did not know the conditions existing in Saskatchewan I would not have attempted to reply to the statements made by the hon. gentleman, but I had the opportunity and pleasure of attending the convention of the United Farmers of Canada held in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. This is the most representative body of agriculturists in that great province, and after attending that convention for three days, I came to the conclusion that if conditions in Alberta were bad, they were as bad if not worse in Saskatchewan.

The government has known for six months of the tremendous drop in the market value of grain and other products of the farm. The members in this corner of the house wish every success to the government of the day, whatever that government may be, in solving the problems of this country. We do not claim for one moment the position of opposition because we know that the govern-

[Mr. Spencer.]

ment has the responsibility and we give them our best wishes in solving their problems. If they are successful they will have our praise, but if they are not, then they will have our criticism. Six months have passed since those in power first knew of the market conditions, but what has been done? From the speech from the throne it would appear that it is another case of Nero fiddling while Rome burns.

In putting on record the facts which I propose to present, some people may think that I am pulling a long bow, but it is very difficult indeed to get the facts across to those who do not understand the true conditions. However, in fairness to the part of the country which I have the honour to represent I am going to place myself before this House of Commons as clearly as possible.

I have in my hand a sample of No. 3 wheat, so-called tough because it has a small amount of moisture in it. This wheat makes a very good brand of flour, but it may be a surprise to some hon. members in this house to know that when this sample was taken to an elevator in my locality in central Alberta, the price offered was 20 cents per bushel—pool payment—if sold by the carload, or 17½ cents per bushel in smaller lots. I have known the pool first payment to be within one cent of the open market price. The next grade, No. 4, went down to the low price of 13½ cents per bushel, which is the price the farmer has to pay at that particular point to get his grain to Fort William.

Let us consider the man who obtained 20 cents per bushel because he was fortunate enough to be able to sell in carload lots. What use does he have to make of that money? It costs him an average of five cents per bushel to haul his grain to the railway; then it costs him 10 cents per bushel for threshing, and about five cents per bushel for harvesting. His total proceeds are gone and he has nothing left to cover the expenses of capital investment, seeding, cultivation, rent, taxes and other expenses. That is the situation in which the western farmer finds himself at the present time.

Mr. MACDOUGALL: What does it cost the farmer in western Canada to produce a bushel of wheat?

Mr. SPENCER: That varies greatly.

Mr. MACDOUGALL: What has been the hon. member's experience? What does it cost him, as a farmer in western Canada, to produce a bushel of wheat?