

Hon. Mr. HAIG: Then second reading should be postponed. I am not on the Banking and Commerce Committee, and I am intensely interested in the Bill. I think that every senator from the three Prairie Provinces must be interested in it. An explanation of the principle should be given, and I want to speak.

Hon. Mr. DANDURAND: I thought we might have the Bill sent to the Banking and Commerce Committee, to be discussed there this evening. We might call it six o'clock now and return this evening to give second reading, unless my right honourable friend desires to speak.

Right Hon. Mr. MEIGHEN: I do. Is there anyone on the Government side who can explain the Bill? If not, I am sure the honourable junior senator from Winnipeg (Hon. Mr. Haig) can.

Hon. Mr. DANDURAND: I could give a fair outline.

Hon. Mr. LACASSE: Call his bluff.

Hon. Mr. DANDURAND: I thought we should not lose the time which we have free this evening.

Right Hon. Mr. MEIGHEN: I prefer that we go on now if we can.

Hon. Mr. DANDURAND: I see that the honourable senator from Peel (Hon. Mr. Marshall) is just coming into the Chamber.

Hon. DUNCAN McL. MARSHALL moved the second reading of the Bill.

He said: Honourable senators, this Bill is designed to make a sort of permanent arrangement that will require fewer sums of money to be advanced annually for seed grain and relief to farmers who have had crop failures. Everybody who knows the West is aware that for more than fifty years assistance has been given annually to some of the farmers in the Prairie Provinces. In the old days, thirty-five or forty years ago, money was advanced by the provincial governments or guaranteed by them to the municipalities, where there were municipalities—and there were only a few at that time outside of Manitoba. Repayment of the money advanced or guaranteed in each case by the province was in turn guaranteed to it by the Federal Government. Most of these grants which were not repaid were taken care of by the provincial governments.

Right Hon. Mr. MEIGHEN: Grants for what?

Hon. Mr. MARSHALL: For seed grain, where there had been crop failures. Seed grain had to be supplied to some farmers in

Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba almost every year.

The real object of this Bill is, through the payment of grants, to enable farmers to live and to supply themselves with grain in the spring following a year of crop failure or very short crop. The giving of assistance is contingent upon one of two things, which the Bill designates as a "national emergency," or a "crop failure." In this respect there is said to be a national emergency when the price of wheat drops below a certain level; and there is a crop failure when the average yield in 100 or 135 townships in a province is less than a certain number of bushels.

The national emergency occurs when wheat drops below 80 cents for No. 1 Northern at Fort William, that being a price which is not high enough to enable a farmer to live whose yield is less than twelve bushels to the acre. When the price is less than 80 cents at Fort William, the Government would pay to the farmers who have a short crop what might be called emergency payments, to tide them over the year. As everybody who is familiar with the Western survey knows, a township consists of 36 sections. Where the average yield in a township is over eight bushels but less than twelve bushels per acre, ten cents per acre will be paid for each cent that the price of wheat is below 80 cents. That is, if wheat is at 70 cents, \$1 per acre will be paid where the average yield is between eight and twelve bushels to the acre. Where the average yield is above four bushels but under eight bushels to the acre, \$1.50 per acre will be paid; and where it is under four bushels, the grant will be \$2 per acre.

But these grants will be paid on only one-half of the cultivated land so cropped, and in no case will they be computed on a larger area than 200 acres, because the intention of the Bill is, not to encourage large farming operations, but to assist farmers who are on small holdings, on what might be called family-sized farms, and who are trying to make a living on them. Further, the grants will be paid only to farmers who are actually occupying and working their land. That is, they will not be available to professional men in towns or cities who farm for their own satisfaction, or, as some people occasionally do, to be useful to their country, or to make money. Of course, as honourable members know, very few people living in cities have been operating farms with a view to making money in late years.

As I have said, under this Bill money may be paid out under two circumstances: a national emergency, or a crop failure. I have already explained what is meant by a national emer-