

External Affairs
Supplementary Paper

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THE WHEAT MARKETING SITUATION

An Address by the Minister of Trade and Commerce,
Mr. C.D. Howe, to the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool in
Regina, Saskatchewan November 5, 1955.

First, I would like to thank the president and directors and officers of the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool for my invitation to be with you today. After having been subjected to a heavier than usual barrage of uninformed criticism over the handling of our wheat marketing situation, it is a relief to be able to discuss the problem with a group of men who have an accurate knowledge of the present situation, coupled with a background of experience with marketing problems extending over many years.

Fortunately for Canada, and for grain producers, the problem we will discuss today is one of over-abundance rather than one of scarcity. During the early part of last May, I arrived in Vancouver, after a six weeks' visit to Australia and New Zealand. During a television interview at the airport, I was asked if I was aware that the prairies were flooded, and that there would be no grain crop this year. I answered the question by saying that I had never known of a crop failure in the month of May, and went on to say that an over-supply of water in early May is likely to mean a good crop, rather than no crop. I mention this only to remind you that had newspaper predictions of that day been a true forecast of coming events, we would be meeting here today to discuss problems much more serious and more difficult of solution than the one now before us.

Nature has performed magnificently. You have harvested bumper crops of all grains, and the quality is high. For the most part, the grain is under cover and safely warehoused. The problem before us is solely that of converting this grain into dollars in the hands of the producer. I suggest that we have faced more serious and more complicated problems, within the experience of all of us.

Within the next few weeks I shall speak to other gatherings in Western Canada about the grain situation. But I felt it only right and proper to make my keynote address to the annual meeting of the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool, one of the world's great co-operative organizations, located in the centre of Canada's wheat economy.

Here at this annual meeting of the Saskatchewan Pool, I feel that I am among friends. I am among producers who have consistently supported the principles of Wheat Board marketing of western grain crops. This support has been invaluable to me and to the Government in recent years. It has enabled me, as Minister of Trade and Commerce, and the Government as a whole,