

The Budget—Mr. Fair

on. I do not think there was any excuse for it. Agriculture was down in the gutter and being stepped on right along, and those things are just further impositions to keep the farmers down where they should not be.

In connection with credit facilities to purchase farm implements, the rate of interest in the past was too high; it is still too high; and any benefits which may accrue through the farm improvement loan bill can speedily be offset by an increase in the prices of the implements we have to buy. It is my belief that the implement business has been a racket for a number of years. My suspicions were confirmed by the committee which, I think in 1938, investigated the farm implement business. So that if the government would see to it that unnecessary profits were not reaped from this business it would do agriculture a great service. I feel also that the farmers are being turned over once again to the bankers, with part of the credit guaranteed by the government, so that we can see where the government's friends come in.

I am glad that the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Gardiner) is in his place. I have here quite a few figures which support statements made by me on several occasions that the farmers are being robbed through prevailing prices for their agricultural produce. This government came into office in 1935. They

were in full control of prices during the crop years 1935-36 to 1942-43 inclusive, and farmers did not live any too prosperous a life during that period. I admit that at the moment conditions are better than they were in 1935; but why should one be expected to compare conditions which are not up to standard with poorer conditions? In 1935-36 the farmers of Canada marketed 216,273,373 bushels of grain at a price of 87½ cents a bushel. Had we received what we were entitled to, the price paid would have been \$1.60; that is, if we were given the same treatment as organized labour, and who will argue that we are not entitled to similar consideration? I am stating this because organized labour was allowed the highest level of wages between 1926 and 1929. Using the 1926 to 1929 figure for fixing our parity price—and I do not agree that that is the proper period to be taken for this purpose—we should have received \$1.41 a bushel for our wheat. This means that upon that crop alone we did not receive \$116,579,373 to which we were justly entitled. That is based on the 1926-29 period, when the farmers received 16.6 per cent of the national income, although constituting approximately one-third of the total population. In tabulated form the figures of wheat sales for the crop years 1935-36 to 1942-43 are as follows:

Year	Bushels sold	Price	Suggested parity	Amount not received
1935-36.....	216,273,373	.87½	\$1.41	\$116,579,373
1936-37.....	165,628,731	1.22		32,087,322
1937-38.....	125,471,078	1.31		12,913,533
1938-39.....	290,539,457	.80		179,189,417
1939-40.....	427,312,750	.70		306,740,947
1940-41.....	458,382,611	.70		329,093,741
1941-42.....	227,854,572	.70		164,590,378
1942-43.....	268,219,159	.90		139,403,292
				\$1,280,598,003
Less wheat board payments.....				60,000,000
Loss to farmers based on \$1.41 per bushel.....				\$1,220,598,003

So that when some people tell us that the farmers are living in clover during the war years, I say that such people had better study the problem all over again. The figures I have given cover wheat only; if we go into other products, here are some prices to which we are justly entitled but which we are not getting. In the case of oats—based again on the same terms for labour—we should receive 69 cents a bushel, and we are receiving 61½ cents. For other products the corresponding figures are: barley, 79½ cents instead of 90 cents; flax, \$2.75 instead of \$3. Again let me point out that if we were getting parity prices

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the figures should be based on the period 1915-19 instead of 1926-29. In the fourth year of the last war wheat averaged \$2.24 a bushel, and up to the present time our high price this year is \$1.25. Perhaps I should quote the prices for the various crop years: in 1935-36 87½ cents; in 1936-37 \$1.22; that is on the open market, there being no wheat board purchases; 1937-38, \$1.31 on the open market. In 1938-39 the initial price of wheat dropped down to 80 cents. In 1939-40 we were threatened at first with a price of 60 cents a bushel, which would have netted farmers for the top grade of wheat a little over 40 cents, but this was finally