

put under cultivation, that can be made to produce a good crop during the present season, should be under crop. I have received numbers of communications from the heads of municipalities to which this matter has been referred by the provincial Government of my province in which they say that, notwithstanding all the efforts that they may put forth to relieve the needy settlers in those municipalities, they find themselves quite unable to cope with the situation and unless either the Dominion or provincial Government come to the assistance of these settlers, as one telegram which I have received within the last two or three days states, 'there will be many thousands of acres of well-prepared land which will lie idle.' That, Sir, is a situation too serious to contemplate and no consideration of a few isolated cases throughout these provinces where, by a more generous policy on the part of this Government, men would obtain seed grain who were not deserving of that consideration and assistance, should lead this Government or any government, at this crisis in our country's history, to restrict the policy of generous aid to any needy settler who, without that aid, will not be able to grow a crop during the coming season.

I was not in the House to hear all the explanations of the situation given by the Minister of the Interior in reply to the hon. member for Regina. I did not hear him give any adequate explanation of the reason why the Government have changed their attitude and their policy on this seed grain question since it first came under their consideration last August and September. I have no desire to give any reason or suggest any motive for this change of mind, but I would like the Minister to tell us frankly why the Government's policy was so generous last October and is now so parsimonious. I have before me a copy of the *Saskatoon Star*, dated Tuesday, October 13. We are used to unofficial reports these days, and this is one of them. Though not official, it is given a prominent place on the front page under the heading 'Dominion Elections, November 19.' That is to say, whether the people of this country were well advised or not, there seems to have been a suspicion in the minds of some editors in the West, and I presume in the East, of the possibility of an occurrence in this country which we generally describe as a general election. I do not suggest that the Government's generous policy of last

[Mr. Neely.]

October had anything to do with this widespread suspicion in the minds of the people that a general election was impending, but I fail to see why, if a generous policy was necessary in the interests not only of the western settler but of Canada and the whole Empire in October last, there should be any change of policy between that time and now. The western farmer who is unable to purchase seed grain this year is in a more unfortunate position than a farmer similarly situated in any previous year. It is a well-known fact that the banks of western Canada are not treating the farmers generously this year. In days gone by the farmer who had a good name and needed ready money could go to his bank and secure an advance to purchase seed grain, but in the present crisis he cannot do so. Nor are our municipalities in a position to obtain money by the sale of debentures at the present time; and unless this Government can relieve the situation I see no prospect of many farmers in different districts in Saskatchewan and Alberta getting any crop this year.

The Minister of the Interior stated that it would take some \$11,000,000 to meet all the demands that have come in for seed grain. As I understand it, we are to be asked to vote this session \$100,000,000 for war purposes, and I am sure that no man on either side of the House will demur at voting such an amount, no matter what the present financial stringency may be. But what better aid could be given in this crisis of our Empire's history than for the Government to see that every farmer who is unable to purchase his own seed grain shall be in a position to grow grain which will help feed the armies of the Allies in Europe. If \$11,000,000 is necessary for that purpose, the money could not be better spent; and if this were done the Government would be helping not only the settler who needs aid, but Canada and the whole Empire, and the cause for which our soldiers are fighting so faithfully at the present time. How could the money be better spent than in supplying the multitudes who to-day are unable to purchase bread, with bread produced on the many hundreds of thousands of acres of land that are ready for crop on our western prairies, but will not be put in crop unless this Government furnishes the seed.

Hon. ROBERT ROGERS (Minister of Public Works): I do not propose to occupy