

*Wheat Export Prices*

not do something soon, more and more farmers are going to become more and more militant.

I now come to the second question. Is the government aware of the type of situation that exists in the west today? Many farmers feel they are not aware of this. I will quote from a press release issued on July 1 by the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool:

More and more western farmers are saying that the federal government does not understand the seriousness of the agricultural income situation, says E. K. Turner, president, Saskatchewan Wheat Pool.

Individual farmers and their organizations, from the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool through to the Canadian Federal of Agriculture, have documented their case accurately, have made reasonable requests, but so far, Ottawa has not taken positive action.

This type of reaction is found in almost every part of Saskatchewan and Manitoba. I maintain that the government is aware of the situation which exists in the west at this time. If they are not aware, they should be.

I wish to go over some of the representations which have been made. Nearly every day in this house the opposition has questioned the government in an endeavour to get them to do something and to inform them of what is happening in western Canada. The government of Saskatchewan had made a request that the federal government implement the two-price system for wheat. Other provincial governments have submitted briefs, have met with the minister and have met with the Prime Minister. Farm organizations have come to Ottawa time and time again. The National Farmers Union has submitted a brief, and the Federation of Agriculture has submitted a brief. Still, very little is done. Even more important, a committee of this house comprised of members of all political parties, including the hon. member for Lanark and Renfrew (Mr. McBride), made a tour of the west. They spoke to the farmers, attended meetings, and then came back and made a report. During their tour of the west they met with some 18,000 farmers on two different days. In summation, the committee concludes that the situation out there needs some drastic remedy if many farmers are to be saved.

Finally, there is another point I should like to make. Two or three cabinet ministers are from the west. One is from Saskatoon and I do not think he could help but be aware of this situation. There is another from Winnipeg. But apparently the Prime Minister did not believe any of these sources, so he went west himself to find out. He was presented

[Mr. Nystrom.]

with briefs. He met with some of the premiers, the Union farm leaders and the farmers themselves. I should like to read part of an article which appeared in the *Regina Leader Post* of July 16. It reads as follows:

The farmers were obviously intent on getting some action. One farmer, who was in charge of a group of tractors, said the demonstration will continue and, if necessary, farmers will take more drastic action.

"We can't afford to see some of the best farmers in Saskatchewan going bankrupt," he said.

If the farmers were not "badly off" they could not be here, he said.

He knew of one farmer who has 70,000 bushels of grain on his farm and had to borrow money to carry on his operation.

But he said the sale of grain is not enough.

What is needed is a graduated minimum price as well as grain sales, he said.

A farmer from Tantallon said farmers have a choice of either protesting in hopes of accomplishing their goals or going bankrupt.

He said he knows of farmers who have 40,000 to 50,000 bushels of grain in storage and "yet will likely have to fold up."

At least 96 per cent of the farmers in Saskatchewan are facing serious financial difficulties, he said.

Tractors converged on Regina from No. 1 highway, No. 11 highway and No. 6 highway—from all directions.

Most of them carried signs with slogans such as "Trudeau is a bum steer," "My grain headache is killing me"—

● (11:50 p.m.)

I think these are just some examples of how serious things are getting in western Canada. I think these demonstrations are a warning signal for the government that if something is not done immediately things are going to be much more serious. Many farmers will seek more drastic alternatives in an attempt to make their rights known to this government. After all, it is their very livelihood and the future not only of themselves but their children that is involved. These people will naturally become very insistent in search of alternatives to make their situation known.

Let me finally come to what must be done. First and foremost, all of us realize that the farmer alone must not bear the cost of an international price war. If something happens which causes the price of grain to fall drastically, the farmer alone must not bear the full brunt. The Canadian public as a whole should share in any loss which occurs, if there is to be one.

There are many long and short term solutions which have to be investigated. Many