

take delivery of 230 million bushels, but it took less than 200 million bushels, because that is all that was offered. This year the Government is willing to take 280 million bushels; but I am sorry to say that in my view, which I hope is wrong, the condition of the soil in Western Canada, beyond one hundred miles west of Winnipeg, is such as not to give promise of a bumper crop.

The assistance provided for in all this legislation is purely an attempt, and I think a proper one, to keep farmers on the land when they have a crop failure. At best the assistance is on the very minimum basis. As to this particular measure, what was said by an honourable member is largely true, that it is an attempt to induce farmers to switch from wheat to other grains. Therefore it is commendable. But I am one of those who hold to the view expressed the other day in the House of Commons Committee on Agriculture by Mr. J. H. Wesson, president of the wheat pool in Saskatchewan, that we cannot be sure of having a big surplus of wheat when the war is over. I believe the Minister of Agriculture made a similar statement in another place about a year ago. I am all in favour of this legislation, because not only is the switching from wheat to barley or oats or other grains a good thing in itself, but it will also help to improve the soil. However, I emphasize that we must not be too sure of having a big surplus of wheat when the war is over.

I am in very close touch with our farming situation in the West, not only through my contact with farmers, but also because I farm a little on my own account. Probably the definition that William Jennings Bryan once gave of an agriculturist would apply to me. He was once asked if he was a farmer, and he replied: "No. I am an agriculturist." In reply to a further question as to the difference between the two, Bryan said, "A farmer makes his money in the country and spends it in the city; an agriculturist makes his money in the city and spends it in the country." I think I belong to the latter class.

I want to address a few remarks to Eastern Canada; not so much to Quebec and Ontario as to the Maritime Provinces. We of the West have a very warm feeling for the Maritimes, because we know what it is to be a poor relation. We know how hard their struggle is. If ever the Maritimes, or Quebec and Ontario, face a problem such as the West faces to-day, they will find no one more eager to give assistance through legislative means, if that is possible, than the people of Western Canada. I say that this legislation is for the benefit of all Canada. I do not know of any

Hon. Mr. HAIG.

more potent influence for peace than the fully-stocked granaries of this country. There is no more useful food that can be offered to the starving people of Europe than our wheat, nor any other which will keep as well in storage for an indefinite period.

I am heartily in accord with this legislation. It will be of great benefit to the farming life of Western Canada in general, and specifically it will help in the development of diversified farming, which not only is highly important for the West now, but will continue to be so under the conditions that undoubtedly will exist when this war is over.

Hon. N. M. PATERSON: Honourable senators, as the witnesses with respect to all three Bills will likely be the same, I entirely agree with the suggestion that the Bills be referred to the same joint committees. I might drop the remark that while it appears that in the interest of Canada we should shorten our crop, because of the surplus, we should remember that sometimes our calculations are not entirely correct; and if we intend to get 200 million bushels or thereabouts to England it may be necessary, in certain circumstances, to ship a great deal more than that. If figures were quoted showing the quantity that arrives there, as compared with the quantity actually shipped, the difference might surprise some honourable senators. So we must be careful not to shorten our crop too much.

With regard to flaxseed, it has been stated that production has decreased from, I think, 12,000,000 bushels to about 3,000,000 bushels. We in the elevator business have been always more or less happy to see the production of flaxseed reduced in the West. I do not think an elevator owner ever handled flax without coming out short. It is pretty slippery stuff and seeps through all cracks. Consequently we have had to deal with many shortages. But in the interest of the West, I think, we should all be content to see an increase in the growth of flaxseed or linseed in the West. This would save importing large quantities. Probably the reason why the production of flaxseed in Western Canada has been more or less low is the severe competition from the Argentine. A great deal of flaxseed was brought in through Montreal, but much of it was re-exported to the United States, which is also a large importer from the Argentine. Now that that situation has been corrected, I think we shall be glad to see an increased flaxseed acreage in the West.

Hon. W. M. ASELTINE: As I think honourable members all know, I am very much interested in the growing of wheat, and therefore in these Bills. I am one of those who are not at all worried about the wheat surplus,