

price. When prices on the United States market varied from \$2 to \$2.50 a bushel I was sure the day would come when we should have to accept half that price. Honourable senators will recall that, at the time of the International Wheat Agreement, the British Government offered us \$2 per bushel. We demanded \$2.05.

Hon. Mr. Horner: That was a mistake.

Hon. Mr. Haig: It was an absolute blunder. We rejected the \$2, but the market price soon fell much below that figure. One cannot hope to succeed with tactics of that kind.

I repeat that the present Government cannot be blamed for either the accumulation of all this wheat nor for the failure of attempted solutions. I can speak with some authority of the position of many farmers in Manitoba and Saskatchewan, where conditions are much the same; in Alberta, with more mixed farming, the situation is rather different. Why do our farmers need the money which will become available if this bill is passed? First, to pay their taxes. Next, to meet the costs of fuel for their farm machinery. Third, to meet their grocery bills, so that their wives and children shall have the means of subsistence for another year. These are three "musts". If you ask why they do not look to the banks for accommodation, I will relate a typical case, and perhaps a personal reference may be pardoned. The girl at the desk in my office tells me that Mr. Brown is here to see me. I invite him in, and ask him what I can do for him. "Well", he says, "I owe you \$250 in interest on that mortgage of yours. I owe \$450 for two years' taxes; and I am in debt for one year's insurance on my buildings. Also there is an unpaid grocery bill. The whole thing amounts to \$1,500, and it has got to be paid. I went to the bank today, and under the new law"—referring to earlier legislation passed by a previous Government—"I may borrow \$1,500. The banker said he would lend it to me, but first he must deduct the \$500 I owe the bank. If I pay that \$500 and do not pay my taxes, I shall lose my land to the municipality. If I pay my taxes my grocer will go unpaid, and he will sue me. If I do not meet the interest on your mortgage you will foreclose. Will you give me one more chance?"

That illustrates the problem of the western farmer; and it is no chicken-coop affair; it is a difficulty of critical importance to him. He cannot handle it at all unless someone will come to his assistance; and I tell you that if, like me, you were brought up on a farm, and knew what it means when a family

are without adequate food or clothing and are reduced to eating grain cooked on the stove, you can understand why this advance is being demanded. Farmers say to us who represent the Government, "We know that you did not get us into this hole, that your party had nothing to do with it, but we are in the hole none the less, and we want your assistance to get us out."

Let me point out to my honourable friend the Leader of the Opposition (Hon. Mr. Macdonald) that his party did not oppose this bill when it was in the other place. Why? Because they were told by the Prime Minister that if they voted against the bill they would have to face the people of this country. I do not believe they would be willing to face the country on this issue. They cannot. They know that the Canadian people are absolutely opposed to the manner in which the wheat business of this country was handled under the former Liberal Government. There were other issues, such as pensions, which made them unpopular, but the greatest factor against them in the three Prairie provinces was their attitude to the wheat problem.

Our farmers are good people. In the first World War the record of volunteering from my province was equal to that of any in any province in Canada. We had a similar high record in the Second World War, and we were second to none in our contributions to patriotic funds and the support of measures on behalf of the armed services. Those who serve us in Parliament or in any other public capacity are as loyal to and as interested in Canada as are any others. I insist that we do not want something that we do not deserve. Our case is this. We say to the people of Canada: "For years and years you got wheat at a lower price than it cost the farmers to raise it. Under the wheat agreement our grain was disposed of at much below the world price." As the honourable senator from Churchill (Hon. Mr. Crerar) told us the other evening, the loss to the farmers of western Canada by reason of the British wheat agreement alone—and I defy contradiction—was not less than \$500 million. I forecast that result on the floor of this house when the agreement was under discussion. But only a few of us shared my opinion, and we were a small voice crying in the wilderness: everybody else laughed at us, but our prediction came true. You can't make people buy wheat if they don't want to buy it. That is fundamental. That is why the former Government was in trouble. It couldn't make people outside of Canada buy our wheat at \$2 a bushel when they