

Mr. GARDINER: Yes. It has never been considered essential in any industry that all that kind of thing should be done in times of depression and in times in which industry is suffering because of world conditions, and it has never been done in any industry. Those things are done in the years when there are better prices and better crops than have existed in western agriculture since 1931. Professor Hope acknowledges that, for he says:

Conservatively it would probably require with average yields a farm price for wheat of average grade of about 90 cents, with coarse grains in proportion, to maintain a reasonable level of living and service the present debt on western farms. It would require somewhat more than this to restore the farming community to the condition of 1931.

I ask you, Mr. Speaker, to recall one fact, that for thirty years the western farmer has had an average price of 95 cents; and Professor Hope says that if you can get an average price of 90 cents in future years—

Mr. MANION: At Fort William?

Mr. GARDINER: He does not say whether at Fort William or not, but he says 90 cents.

Mr. COLDWELL: On the farm.

Mr. GARDINER: He does not say that, and he has not been dealing with that.

Mr. PERLEY: That is the farm price. The average price at Fort William is over a dollar.

Mr. GARDINER: The hon. member for Qu'Appelle reminds me that the average price of 95 cents is at the farm. Even if this 90 cents were at the farm it would work out as I have indicated. I make that statement simply because in my opinion it is most essential, in order to have that western area properly financed by the dominion, to re-establish confidence in the minds of the people of Canada that that area can be made to maintain farmers' homes. Even if we have the methods of marketing no better than we have had for the last thirty years, if we have markets as good as we have had in the last thirty years, and crops as good as those that we have had in the last thirty years, then we shall still be able to maintain farming operations in the western part of Canada. And if I were not confident of the truth of this I would not stand on the floor of the house and ask the people of Canada to pay into that area \$4,000,000 a year to rehabilitate it, or justify having put into the area last year from \$25,000,000 to \$50,000,000, as it may work out, in order that we may have time to work out a more permanent policy. Nor would I

be saying to-night that we should now inaugurate a policy based upon sounder principles, under which we will pay in periods of difficulty in the present and in the future in order to bring the farmers through distressing times without the necessity of accumulating more and more debt.

The object of the legislation, the second reading of which I am moving to-night, is this. It is to set up a system under which some assistance can be brought to those in need during periods of difficulty. We have periods of difficulty during which price does not matter at all; those are periods when we have no crop. There have been, during the last ten years, two or three years in all parts of the prairie area, and more years in much of the area, when large sections of the country had no grain to sell, and in those years the farmers required assistance if they were not going to go more deeply into debt than they were before. In this bill there is a section that deals with crop failure periods. It is proposed that we shall pay to all the farmers within crop failure areas the sum of \$2.50 an acre on half their cultivated acreage, with a limit of 200 acres upon which they will be paid, or a limit of \$500 to be paid to any farmer at a time when he has no crop. In the same section we set a minimum amount to be paid to any farmer. That will be \$200. It may be said to me that in the period we have been passing through we have placed certain limitations upon the provinces becoming a responsibility on the federal government. The previous government in 1934 acknowledged federal responsibility for taking care of the drought areas of western Canada, and we have assumed that responsibility since coming into office and have been paying for the costs in those particular areas. We have set up a standard under which those areas are accepted as crop failure areas. We have not previously admitted a province unless they had, at the time of their admission, twenty-five municipalities with a crop of five bushels or under, and we have insisted on provinces going out when the number having five bushels or under had been reduced to ten municipalities or less. Manitoba went out the year before last on that basis, and Alberta last year on the same basis. Saskatchewan still had over forty municipalities last year with five bushels or less, and they have been under the financial care of the federal government during the present year.

This bill sets up 135 townships, not municipalities, as the number that must have five bushels or under before a crop failure area is established, and I would suggest the reason for that. We believe that when the number