

*Natural Resources—Development*

deposits there, particularly those at Pine Point. It would, of course, go through an area which would then be opened up for agricultural development.

The chief difficulty that western agriculture has been up against in recent years has been the inability to sell the wheat which we have grown, and the consequent building up of very large surpluses which, together with the world surpluses, to which the United States is the greatest contributor, have depressed prices. The Gordon commission comments on this at page 31. I will just read a sentence from the report:

The difficulties of today notwithstanding,—

They are talking about the surplus, and so forth. I continue:

The difficulties of today notwithstanding, if our estimates of foreign and domestic demand are reasonable ones, it does not seem that Canada should plan any permanent reduction from the present acreage sown to wheat.

I do not know what they mean by "permanent reduction from the present acreage sown to wheat", but if they have any reference to conditions as they exist, and as they are likely to exist in the next few years at least, I disagree with the commission's finding in this regard. I do not think they paid sufficient attention, probably, to the situation in other countries, especially in the United States. There has been a very great increase in the production of wheat in other countries of the world and particularly in the United States. In the United States it has been produced on a smaller acreage. At the same time we have the fact that in the United States, in spite of a very large increase in population, they are consuming less wheat than they did before. I have a few figures that I should like to put on the record in that connection. In the 10-year period 1930-1939 the United States produced an average 746 million bushels of wheat per year but in the 10-year period 1945-1954 they produced 1,145 million bushels of wheat per year. During the period 1930-1939 they consumed 685 million bushels of wheat annually, but in the latter period, 1945-1954, they consumed only 680 million bushels of wheat per year. In other words, they consumed 5 million bushels less in spite of the fact that their population increased during that period by many millions. To some extent the same thing has been true in other countries. The total production of wheat in the four large exporting countries, Canada, the United States, Australia and Argentina in the period 1930-1939 was 1,488 million bushels per year, but in the period 1945-1954 it was 1,973 million bushels yearly. In other words, in the world as a whole, and particularly in the United

States, production has gone up but consumption has not gone up to anything like the same extent. Therefore, I think that unless there is a great world drought, which I do not think is likely and which we all certainly hope will not take place, we can not expect to sell our present wheat production for many years to come. Consequently, I believe our policy should be to reduce acreage, to put this acreage into grass and into coarse grains and thus increase livestock production.

Our policy should be along that line. It should be a conservation policy designed to retain the fertility of the soil as well as cutting down our production of wheat and increasing our production of livestock, which it would appear we could fairly safely do.

I find the recommendations of the Gordon commission with regard to agriculture extremely contradictory. Let us examine what they say on page 27 of the report:

... the anticipated growth of the domestic market and a continuation of the trend toward increasing consumption of meats; these factors, taken together, will result in substantially more hog raising, particularly on the prairies, and in more cattle raising in all parts of Canada.

In other words the commission envisages a bigger market for livestock but it not only suggests no way to increase production but actually recommends the very things which will hold down production. The report goes on to say:

Settlement policies designed to bring more land under cultivation were essential in the early days; and other programs with the purpose of inducing expansion of production may have been appropriate.

This is a policy of defeatism which the commission recommends as far as agriculture is concerned. At page 27 the report continues:

Under the conditions of today and of the near future such policies and programs would tend to have a depressing effect on farm prices and incomes. We suggest that substantial irrigation projects, while desirable from the standpoint of local areas, could be harmful rather than helpful to farmers in the aggregate.

It appears obvious from what I have read that the commission is recommending there should be no increase in irrigation projects or anything of that sort and thus what they really recommend is that we do all those things which will prevent the increase in the production of livestock which they claim is necessary. They recommend that we retain our present wheat acreage, that we open up no new land for agriculture and build no new irrigation projects. A great proportion of the land in southern Alberta and southern Saskatchewan can economically and profitably grow only wheat because coarse grains do not do well on that dry land. If we are going to increase livestock production we will have to put in irrigation in order to provide pasture and hay to see the cattle through the