

a lot of misunderstanding throughout the country. I refer to page 2623 of *Hansard*, and the following quotations:

It has been proven over and over again that twenty bushels to the acre of wheat can be produced at a cost of from 30 cents to 40 cents a bushel.

The minister did not make any mention of two sections of land, but just made the bald statement that provided you produced twenty bushels to the acre you could produce wheat at a cost of from 30 cents to 40 cents a bushel, and he repeated it several times. Apparently he is having a hard job to convince himself of the truth of it. I should think he would hardly expect hon. members to be so gullible as to swallow it. There perhaps would have been some excuse for an eastern member making a statement of that kind. There might possibly have been some excuse for a western business man to make such a statement, but when a responsible minister of this government who is familiar with conditions, the Minister of Agriculture, makes such a statement I find it very hard to understand what his motive may be.

Mr. ROSS (Moose Jaw): What was the statement?

Mr. QUELCH: The statement was that provided there was a production of 20 bushels per acre, a farmer could produce wheat at from 30 to 40 cents per bushel.

Mr. GARDINER: That is not the statement.

Mr. QUELCH: I will read it again. The minister said:

It has been proven over and over again that 20 bushels to the acre of wheat can be produced at a cost of from 30 to 40 cents a bushel.

Mr. GARDINER: Read the next sentence.

Mr. QUELCH: It reads:

We have had a great deal of discussion about the cost of producing wheat. It costs a certain amount to work an acre of land whether you get any wheat off it or not; it costs a certain amount to harvest it if you do get any wheat off it. It has been proven over and over again, I say, that 20 bushels to the acre of wheat can be produced at a cost of from 30 to 40 cents a bushel.

I maintain that there is absolutely no justification for that statement.

Mr. GARDINER: If my hon. friend will put the two sentences together he will see that they refer to the cost of working the land and the cost of taking the wheat off the land. Anyone who knows anything about farming in western Canada knows that that can be done for that price.

Mr. DOUGLAS (Weyburn): That is not the cost of production.

Mr. GARDINER: That is exactly what the statement says.

Mr. QUELCH: When the minister made that statement it was challenged by several hon. members, and the minister then said that he was not including debt. Seventy per cent or even more of the farms in western Canada are held under mortgages, agreements of sale or on a rental basis. The usual practice is to turn over twenty-five or thirty per cent of the crop to the mortgage company. That thirty per cent must be included in the cost of production. If it is agreed that thirty per cent of the crop has to go to the mortgage company and that that must be included in the cost of production, it can hardly be said that a bushel of wheat can be produced for from thirty to forty cents.

Mr. GARDINER: I made that clear in the statement.

Mr. QUELCH: It certainly does not indicate that clearly. According to the comments in various papers, the general impression is that the Minister of Agriculture stated that 20 bushels to the acre of wheat can be produced at a cost of from 30 to 40 cents a bushel.

Mr. ROSS (Moose Jaw): As an operating cost.

Mr. QUELCH: Debt charges are bound to be part of your operating costs; then you must include depreciation charges on machinery. It is all very well to say that a farmer does not have to pay his debts, but in some cases he must pay them. He may have to hand over thirty per cent of his crop to the mortgage company, or if he is renting he has to pay that to the owner. If he does not hand it over, he can be charged with stealing.

Mr. ROSS (Moose Jaw): That is a production cost, not an operating cost.

Mr. QUELCH: The minister did not define it very clearly. As an hon. member says, they would have to be tight in order to swallow that statement.

Mr. HARTIGAN: Aberhart said that 60 cents is a fair price for wheat.

Mr. QUELCH: Sixty cents is quite different from 30 to 40 cents.

Mr. HARTIGAN: With that operating cost, 60 cents would be a fair price.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member for Acadia (Mr. Quelch) has the floor and he must not be interrupted without his consent.