

Supply—Agriculture

council going to do? I put a question on the order paper asking for the terms of reference. I was told they had not yet been decided. The reply came from the Department of Trade and Commerce which is not represented here today. I asked how the board would be financed. The answer was: nobody knows, yet. If the wheat board needs more staff and more money, why not say so? If we think more needs to be done in the field of research, why do we hesitate to beef up the amount we are putting into the laboratory services of the Board of Grain Commissioners? After all, this is their job. They already have the power under the act. They have the know-how and their staff includes some excellent men. But, as I have said on earlier occasions, the amount of money they have been allowed to spend has remained static while the industry which they serve is growing. We should have increased the amount of money in their hands if what they had was not adequate to meet the need.

● (4:50 p.m.)

The Deputy Chairman: I regret to interrupt the hon. member but his time has expired.

Some hon. Members: Continue.

The Deputy Chairman: Has the hon. member leave to continue?

Some hon. Members: No.

Some hon. Members: Yes.

Mr. Gleave: I shall take only a few minutes and I thank the committee and yourself—

The Deputy Chairman: I regret that I heard some noises.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Lambert (Bellechasse): Mr. Chairman, I do hope it is not because of me that my honourable friend was kept from continuing his remarks, but in any event, I thank you sincerely for giving me the opportunity to express a few opinions on the important matter now under study.

I shall deal with the matter rather briefly, because the estimates of the department were studied in committee fairly seriously, I would even say very seriously. I merely wish to point out to the honourable Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Olson) that we attach great importance to the development of Canadian agriculture so that our country can, as much as possible, feed our own people as well as those of countries less fortunate than ours.

[Mr. Gleave.]

We agree that the years we are now going through are very difficult, and that the government has very complicated problems to solve. That is why we do not want to be harsh with the government; we merely want to work with it in an attempt to find together the most advantageous solutions, not only for the farmer, but also for all the people concerned who live on the progress of agriculture, when there is progress.

Some industries can provide employment to the extent where agriculture can order from them the goods that are necessary to agricultural production.

Mr. Chairman, the agricultural economy has grown difficult, I would even say cruel, at times. In addition, there are the serious effects which stem from a regrettable confusion between political and economic functions and I should like to make a distinction.

We invite the people to reflect on the various fields of responsibilities. Farmers themselves have their very own responsibilities, which they must accept by doing their utmost to lower the cost of their production in order to market top quality products at a price commensurate with the purchasing power of the majority of the people and also to compete, if needs be, with the goods from abroad.

Until a few years ago, family farms met the needs of the times fairly well, but because of the rapid industrialization of our country, agriculture must go through a complete transformation which, even though we accept it, must nevertheless meet the requirements of the commonweal and social justice. Because of its unreliable nature, agriculture demands from all those who are engaged therein the most absorbing activity, whether it is the farmers themselves who are concerned, or the governments, at all levels. As things are progressing in our country, a greater number of means are available to us to carry out more efficient operations on the farm; in a way, we are becoming the victims of this progress.

I listened, since I came into this chamber, to speeches of members representing various areas of the country and everywhere, when we speak of agriculture, we realize that we are caught in a squeeze where we can hardly breathe.

We often hear about the problems of the western grain producers, and I am happy about that, because that gives me an opportunity to become acquainted with the problems facing us across the nation.