

*Grain*

extent I am, too; but I also appreciate something else. I appreciate our one great organization in western Canada, and that is our wheat pool.

When the minister was speaking the other day at the resolution stage he said the wheat pool was willing to co-operate, and that if there was any loss they were willing to pay part of it. I ask here and now: why did not all the grain companies of western Canada offer to do that? We have looked after them; we have given them good dividends; we have done the right and proper thing so far as the elevator companies in western Canada are concerned. There is no reason in the world why they should not all have come forward and said, "We are willing to render a slight service to the people of Canada, to the government of this country".

If that had been done there would have been better co-operation in my part of the country for the simple reason, as one speaker said—I think it was the hon. member for Melfort (Mr. Wright)—that some of the farmers are fifty miles from the banks. In my constituency some of them are sixty or seventy miles away. When they get to the bank, the banker will look at them in a very discouraging way. Their assets are not very great. They may have only seventy-five or a hundred acres broken, at the very outside. And in passing let me tell the house that during August and September there were only nine days when we did not have rain in that northeastern part. That is a very serious situation.

No one up in that country is looking for a handout. We do not want handouts. All we want is fair play. We want to see the banks play fair with the farmers who have had the small crops.

**Mr. H. R. Argue (Assiniboia):** Mr. Speaker, the remarks of the hon. member for Mackenzie (Mr. Ferrie) are most significant at this time. Because this problem affects his constituency so vitally, I believe the hon. member is beginning to realize the possible shortcomings of the measure before us. He mentioned that the small farmers might have difficulty getting loans from the bank. I agree with him that the wheat pool organization could have handled this measure, and that the elevator companies should have offered to go along with the wheat pool in that regard. Local wheat pool agents and the agents of other elevators are at every delivery point. They know the circumstances of the farmers. They are close to the situation, and in my view they could have handled this particular type of assistance for farmers in a better manner than is provided in this legislation.

[Mr. Ferrie.]

As the minister has said, I think it is clear that the government is risking very little in this legislation by way of guarantee. The maximum loan a farmer can get is \$1,000. If he has already delivered \$1,000 worth of grain, he cannot get a loan. If he has delivered grain to an amount less than \$1,000, the value of the delivered portion is deducted from his loan. The amount of the loan is entered on his permit, and when the farmer delivers grain to the elevator the full price of that grain is deducted for payments on his loan.

I, for one, hope the farmers in western Canada will not have to use this measure. I know that if I, as a farmer, needed money I would think twice before putting myself in the financial strait-jacket represented by a loan under this measure.

Other hon. members have said that the full amount should not be deducted as the farmer delivers his grain. I think perhaps a percentage should have been deducted. If a farmer has \$1,000 worth of grain out under the snow and has threshed no grain, and receives a loan of \$1,000; then, although I am sure the farmer will do his best, what incentive has he to go into more debt to get that \$1,000 worth of grain out of the snow, when he will not receive any cash when he markets the grain? I believe there should have been a percentage, perhaps to the extent of 50 per cent or even more, if the minister had wished to do it in that way. But when a farmer gets a loan under this legislation, surely a portion of the proceeds from the sale of his grain, when he markets it subsequently, should go to the farmer, and a portion to the bank, not the whole of the money to the bank as is provided in this legislation.

I am sure the banks will be happy about the measure. They are going to be able to lend millions of dollars with absolutely no risk. The farmers are tied in a strait-jacket. Unless they quit farming or die they are going to have to pay the whole sum, and pay it in short order.

The minister has said that the government is risking little or nothing by giving this guarantee. One would think there was no emergency in western Canada at all, after reading this bill. I was glad that when the people of Winnipeg, Rimouski, Cabano and the Fraser valley faced emergencies the government came through with some money for their help. I believe if the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Gardiner) had been handling this measure he would have brought in something better. From the discussions he had in Saskatchewan I believe he had another plan in mind, and that it was a better plan.