

*Grain*

that is the way it should be handled. I hope that next year, the year after, and the following year the government will consider as a precedent the good job the minister has done in that respect this fall, and will continue to pay out whatever balance there is in the various pools at the end of the crop year, and to make those payments before the beginning of the next calendar year. In his statement tonight the minister said the total of these final payments amounted to some \$130 million. He added to that, as far as farm income is concerned, the returns farmers received from having marketed in the present crop year, that is up until December 6, some 291 million bushels of grain. The farmers of western Canada have \$130 million as the final payment from the various pools. They have the proceeds of 291 million bushels of grain. I would take it that from all these sources western farmers have received this fall something in the neighbourhood of \$400 million.

**Mr. Howe:** That is correct; yes.

**Mr. Argue:** The minister says that is a correct statement. I now come to this, Mr. Speaker. The most the banks can lend under this measure is \$20 million, which is just 5 per cent of the money the farmers have already received. It would seem to me that if half the crop in Alberta, or nearly half, is still unthreshed, if 20 or 25 per cent of the crop is still unharvested in Saskatchewan, loans amounting to 5 per cent of the total amount of money the farmers have already received will be insufficient to assist in an adequate way those farmers who have been unable to harvest and market their crops.

Most of the suggestions that were made in western Canada in the last two months as to an adequate advance on unthreshed grain amounted to a figure of \$10 an acre. If that was a reasonable figure—and it seemed reasonable to me—the \$1,000 limit means the farmer who is able to satisfy the bank manager that he is a good risk will be able to get an advance equal to \$10 an acre on a hundred acres of crop. The basis on which the Prairie Farm Assistance Act is operated is more generous than that, in that payments are made on one-half the cultivated land up to 400 acres, or payments are made on up to 200 acres of crop. I believe the \$1,000 loan the farmer can obtain under this provision is too little for the majority of those farmers who have been unable to harvest their crops. I do not make that statement because I want to criticize this measure. I do so because I do not think \$1,000 goes very far on a farm. A thousand dollars does not go very far for anyone, even if their only expense is that of

[Mr. Argue.]

living and providing for their families. The farmer has additional expenses. Most farmers have incurred obligations all through the summer to the local storekeeper and the local fuel dealer. Most farmers now have very large obligations to implement companies. When one considers that, along with these obligations, the farmer will have to provide for his own family's living expenses and other farm expenses, the \$1,000 ceiling to my mind is too low. I think the ceiling should have been not less than \$2,000.

Before I sit down, Mr. Speaker, I want to impress upon the minister my conviction, for what it is worth, that there should be provision for farm storage. It has been said over and over again that it would not cost the federal treasury a single dollar. If one farmer, because of bad weather conditions, because there is a shortage of box cars, cannot deliver his grain in the fall, I believe he should be entitled to a slightly higher initial payment next spring or early next summer when he does deliver his crop. The elevator companies are now given 1 cent per bushel per month as storage. It has been sufficient to encourage the elevator companies to build large annexes and other additional storage. Out of that 1 cent per bushel per month they have been able to finance the investment cost, cover depreciation and cover interest on the capital investment. If it is fair to pay farm storage to elevator companies it should be fair likewise to pay farm storage to farmers. If that provision were made, Mr. Speaker, then the commercial interest rate that the banks will charge for the loans made under this measure would not be a burden on the farmer. I also think the government should consider—and I hope they will—making a 75 per cent advance on farm-stored grain, not only as an emergency policy for this year but also as a good permanent piece of legislation.

In a word, Mr. Speaker, I welcome the legislation. I would prefer to have seen advances made through the elevator companies at no interest charge to the farmer. But to assist the farmer to pay the interest under the present measure I hope the government will make provision for the payment of farm storage which would be more than sufficient to cover the 5 or 6 per cent rate of interest payable to the banks.

**Mr. W. Chester S. McLure (Queens):** Since I may not have an opportunity to say a few words when the bill is introduced I should like to take a few minutes now. I am neither a western farmer, a grain grower nor an eastern farmer, but I have listened to the appeals that have been made here since the session