

*Wheat Acreage Reduction*

does not spray it. Also, he must pay taxes on the land for two years and, as I say, the land will be out of production for two years because he cannot afford to put livestock on it. He must keep his land out of production this way in order to obtain \$10 an acre. Clearly, that farmer cannot afford to subscribe to this plan at all.

The Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Olson) has told us in this debate that the government will probably set up mediation boards or settlement boards to deal with problems as they arise. I can tell him that just about half the people out west will appear before these boards, because this plan was not designed to deal with people, and farmers in particular. As I see it, it is just another bureaucratic monster spawned by those people who brought forward the white paper earlier this year.

I think in this country too many boards and agencies have tried for too long to thwart the law of supply and demand. Who can tell me that farmers today with surplus grain would not be better off if they could sell it for 75 cents a bushel or even \$1 a bushel, instead of letting it pile up and of accepting what the government is offering in allowable sales? If we had used the \$1 billion we spent during the last 15 years for grain storage, together with the \$140 million to be spent under this program, for price supports of grain to sell it on the markets of the world, we should not be where we are today. Any such program would have had a far greater multiplier effect on the economy than the sort of subsidy now being proposed.

It is my experience that western farmers do not want charity and programs like this one. Programs like the one proposed make the people of the rest of Canada imagine that western farmers are receiving charity. They do not want charity; they want better Canadian salesmanship in world markets. Some say, "But if you enter into national competition in an open market, farmers may have to take lower prices for their wheat, and they cannot afford that." I ask, are not the United States, Australia and other countries competing in the open markets of the world, and are their farmers taking in much less money than ours? I do not think so. Certainly we must compete. We cannot live under the artificial world marketing system we have accepted in this country for very much longer. I have been speaking about charity: when programs like this one are implement-

ed, the people of the urban and industrial centres of our country think the farmers are accepting charity.

• (10:50 p.m.)

The media—I do not know whether it does this on instructions from the minister—sometimes projects this image also. Last Saturday I watched a CBC television program which originated in Regina where some farmers from Indian Head were interviewed. They were interviewed in, of all places, the local bar. This may seem a little laughable but all it proves is that farmers drink a little beer. There are not many of them drinking much beer these days. Why does the media not perform its services in other arenas? Why do they project the farmers in this condition? Situations are portrayed, for example, of Indian reservations where there are poor, starving children huddled in the cold with their parents in tarpaper shacks. Why doesn't the media show what they do with their spare time? Why do they not go to the local pub where these people spend 75 per cent of the treaty money they get? Why do they not depict the situation as it really is, instead of segregating the farmer and depicting him in the barroom, when he is one of the most independent hardworking people in our nation?

A similar situation exists with tractors. The news media show big, expensive machines on the farms, suggesting that these fellows cannot be poor. They do not mention the large debt on this machinery. In many cases it is only through the generosity of the machine dealers that the farmer has this equipment. If the farmers are ever forced out of business, the situation will be different in the cities and the industrial areas of Canada. This is one of the greatest areas of productivity in this country, indeed in the world.

The minister responsible for the Wheat Board suggested we should go across the nation and help him sell this program by explaining it to the people. The minister spoke to groups of people. I do not know whether there were 1,000 or 600 people at Mackenzie. He spoke to 500 people somewhere else. Why does the minister not ask some members of the opposition to fly out there with him in the government Jetstar and explain the situation to the people? There are some things we could explain as clearly as the minister.

I wish to again emphasize the hypocritical attitude of the government in proposing these