

perhaps for Winnipeg and Regina, but the grocery stores, restaurants, clothing stores, dry goods shops, and so on, in the small communities.

I have driven through Western Canada, and I want my friends from the west to know there is one Ontarian who has a very deep and abiding love and appreciation for Western Canada and our prairies, for its tremendously rich history and for the people who developed that part of our great country. The only thing that keeps us from being great again is that bunch over there. Perhaps I should not say that it is the only thing. It is true there are 30 million unemployed workers in the western industrial world, but I do not know why the Liberal Government here in Ottawa has to blame the economic situation constantly on Germany, France, and Italy, for example, and it is not as bad there as it is here right now in terms of employment and inflation.

Why do they say things are bad all over and then do nothing about it? We had what I can describe as sermonettes a couple of weeks ago, and we had the tremendous, flowery rhetoric of the local Liberal pow-wow at the Chateau over the weekend, and a host of promises about a tremendous economic turnaround. Well, a chap by the name of Herbert Hoover preached that for a couple of years in the early 1930s, and he was very quickly replaced by a man called Roosevelt. Nothing comes of rhetoric or promises; what we need is action, and today we are talking about action on the farm front, and the tremendous positive financial effect it will have in certain areas of the manufacturing and food processing sectors. We are not just talking about farms and farmers, we are talking about a major portion of the Canadian economy when we talk about Bill C-134 and its tremendous shortcomings.

● (1820)

The Canadian Federation of Agriculture, Mr. Speaker, at a meeting I attended early last spring, presented a brief on a proposal which I think merits tremendous consideration on the part of all Members of this House. It has already been mentioned by both my Conservative friends and other speakers from the NDP, that is the agribond. I do not profess to be an expert on the agribond and all the inner workings of that kind of approach, but it strikes me, as a lay person, as being an excellent idea. Retiring farmers would, let us say, sell their farm for \$250,000 or \$300,000, if they can get that much for it today. On the one hand they do not really need all that rightaway, and they do not need to pay the capital gains tax in one fell swoop either. Let us say they take two-thirds and put it into this general pool known as the agribond fund. While they may not get 12 per cent, 13 per cent or 14 per cent return on their investment, I think they would be prepared to take 7 per cent or 8 per cent if they knew that the money was going exclusively and specifically to farmers in need or to young farmers who want to buy their first farm or to other farmers who want to expand their operations or modernize, provided, of course, their farms are viable and potentially good.

It is a good investment, a safe investment and a helpful kind of investment because it is, in a way, self help. The retiring farmer is helping the young farmer either to get started or to

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expand. Money could then be lent within the farming community at much lower rates than the current market would demand. I do not know, it could be 10 per cent or even less, depending on how the agribond was set up. So I highly commend, along, I think, with every other speaker today on this side of the House anyway, the concept and application of the agribond. I commend the Canadian Federation of Agriculture and any others who are directly responsible for coming up with this idea.

Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton): First-class idea.

Mr. Blackburn: First-class idea, very true. I would like to hear somebody on the Liberal side challenge us on this side on the agribond. Maybe it is not the best way, though I have not heard from anyone over there all afternoon. Secondly, if there is a Liberal over there who is interested in farmers and their problems, I invite him or her to stand up this evening and challenge this side of the House on the matter of the agribond. Tell us what is wrong with it. Tell us where or how it will not work. Give us a reasonable argument and maybe we will oppose it. But we have not heard a thing from the Liberals on this very vital issue.

While we on this side of the House are often blamed for being negative, Mr. Speaker, I might say my speech has not been entirely negative. I have put forward some constructive suggestions concerning this Bill, such as lower interest rates to farmers who borrow money, and that the agribond should not only be considered but should be implemented just as quickly as possible. I have also mentioned how this, in turn, would have a positive effect on the agriculture implement industry, the parts industry, indeed, the economy as a whole. However, as I said, we on this side are often accused of being totally negative. Well, I am going to quote from the *Globe and Mail* of November 4, 1982. The article refers only to prairie farmers, but the picture is the same in Ontario, Quebec and the Maritimes. In fact, in some parts of Ontario it is even worse. It says:

Prairie farm income in 1982 will drop to its lowest level in 10 years, farmers attending a conference sponsored by United Grain Growers Ltd. of Winnipeg in Banff, Alta., were told.

UGG directors said in a year-end forecast that farm income will drop 28 per cent from 1981 mainly because of sliding grain prices and higher costs borne by farmers.

I mentioned those costs earlier in my speech. High interest rates, high energy costs, fertilizer costs and so on. The article goes on:

Only good yields and high deliveries of grain will prevent an even steeper drop in income, the UGG report said.

After an increase in costs, farmers' profits will drop \$708-million from 1981, the report said. "Comparing the purchasing power of today's dollar to the deflated dollar, what a farmer could buy for 37 cents in 1971 cost him \$1 in 1982."

Farmers' incomes will drop 36 per cent in Saskatchewan and 34 per cent in Manitoba.

I have enough faith, Mr. Speaker, in rural Canada and our farming community to know that the majority of our farmers will hang in and weather this very severe financial crisis in