

*Government Orders*

As a result, because of the flow, because of the highs and the lows, there was a tremendous instability in the market. There was too much of the product at one time, followed along weeks later where there was a shortage. You can imagine the way that the price would be following the supply. When there was an abundance on the market of course the price would drop. When there was a shortage on the market the price would go up. Can you imagine anybody in the industry trying to decide that they were going to expand their industry with that kind of fluctuation in the market? It was just impossible to do.

There was no control then on the market at all, reflecting those great swings in supply, followed by dramatic rises in price, immediately followed when the supply became plentiful again with a fall out of the bottom of the market. As a matter of fact, there were times when you could not even give away the product. You pour it on the ground because there was no thought at that time that a marketing board would ever work. But the Liberal Government made it work. I think it is a credit to the former Liberal government under Eugene Whelan that set marketing boards on a path that they could follow. I find, as the days go by, that we are picking at those processes. We are picking at them through this proposed legislation. One by one the farmers are starting to fall under the pressure.

Without an orderly marketing system the problems just feed on themselves. Without stability in price farmers could not plan ahead. They could not advance their operations because of the uncertainties in their industry with the result that many got out. The problem was that it was too risky for them and occasionally too many would get out. Then you had the reverse effect of a shortage of supply and you were on the roller coaster again.

This bill puts some stability into the market. It is not an expensive proposition if you are talking about dollars. I really question the motive behind the government in tampering with that when it was a relatively inexpensive source of revenue. It was interest free. But why keep the program at all if you are going to pay interest on it? I am sure most progressive farmers would say: "Well, we will go to the bank and borrow our money there".

The important thing in something as basic as food is that measures are needed to ensure a constant supply, a year-round constant supply of a good product at a good price. That is what this program was endeavouring to do. It would stabilize the market to allow a steady flow of produce into the market. This is so necessary when we are talking about something as basic as food. I do not think we should allow the basic supply of food to swing with the market, with the extremes that went with the market-place. It is just too important.

In stabilizing the market as it applies to the agricultural industry, whether it is grain or dairy product, it does not matter; the same support system is necessary and needed. It was appreciated by Canadian farmers. It is the best deal for all concerned.

To initiate programs where none exist now with this government seems to be a thing of the past. I am suggesting that the government could at least support the good programs that are in place. They are not expensive. I think everything possible should be done to see that they are protected because they have the effect of stabilizing a very important aspect in an industry in this country which is one of our basic programs.

That is what the program is designed to do. That is what it is all about. That is what it was doing. It does by making free interest loans available to farmers, allowing the farmer to release their crops onto the market in an orderly manner. Interest free loans allow farmers to do this. Otherwise, they would have to release their products onto the market as soon as they were harvested. We all know what the price would be at that point.

I am not sure if the processors and the multinationals would agree with me. I doubt very much if they would. They would like it very much if the cash strapped farmer would come with hat in hand, begging to sell his crops in a hurry because he is probably in the position where he has to get rid of his produce at bargain basement prices. You know the devastating effect that would have on the industry and on the individual farmer, even over a short period of time.

If the government could make some loan money available, the farmer would not be placed in that pressure situation where he must sell in order to stay afloat. That is what the concern of farmers has always been, the ability to stay afloat.