

assist western farmers. This bill is consequential upon the inherent policy the government has adopted; it is simply another measure to sink the western grain farmer into complete oblivion.

This bill is based upon over-all government philosophy which is designed to remove two-thirds of the farmers from the agricultural industry by 1990. That is the government's solution or cure for the ills agriculture is suffering today. This has been spelled out abundantly by the task force on agriculture and is closely related to the philosophy expressed by the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) and the ministers responsible for discharging agricultural policy. As a result of this policy announced by the task force and the Prime Minister in June of 1968, we were faced with Bill C-176. That was more than a year ago. It was misleading in that it suggested it would cure the major difficulties faced by the producers, particularly in the field of marketing. By reading between the lines one can realize that this was nothing more than another form of bureaucratic control with the decisions of farmers being abridged and placed in the hands of an all-powerful council appointed by the minister.

We note in this bill also an adamant attempt by the government to gain control of the beef industry. This industry is one of the few which has survived without government interference. In spite of the promise of the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Olson) to cattlemen that he would protect the industry, we find that as a result of the provisions of Bill C-176 the industry can be taken over. This was either a deliberate attempt to mislead the cattlemen or an indication that he has lost the confidence of his colleagues. We now witness massive public concern by the agricultural industry toward this bill. People are writing to members of the House urging us to detain its passage. They are concerned because this is another deliberate attempt to interfere with their right to make decisions.

The stabilization program announced some time ago by the minister was headlined by the statement that western farmers were to receive \$100 million. This was misleading in that the program was designed on the basis of a rearrangement of payments. The minister must know very well that in 1968-69, as a result of revisions to the Temporary Wheat Reserves Act and the covering of losses in pool accounts about 130 million were put into the federal treasury. I suggest this is simply a rearrangement of financial affairs respecting the storage and sale of grain. For one to go about this country suggesting that farmers are getting an additional 100 million is downright misleading; it is sheer nonsense. The farmers will not be misled or trapped into believing this. The new quota system disregards the small family farm. We are basically concerned about these entities. I am sure many others in this House share my view that a small, mixed farm operator is still the most efficient farmer and contributes greatly to society.

In this bill we note, in addition to the new quota system, provision for the removal of the unit quota system which was a safeguard to the small producer. The 400-bushel unit quota gave the small operator breathing

Prairie Grain Advance Payments Act

space in which to meet his current expenditures. This is being withdrawn. This is further proof that Bill C-239 is another step toward the eradication of the small farm operation in Canada. This can be compared with the policies of the Canadian Dairy Commission which became effective in 1967-68 and resulted in a decrease of about 50 per cent in registered dairy producers. In addition to this reduction and because of regional rationalization we have experienced the phenomenon of 80 per cent of our dairy products being produced in the two central provinces. This has caused severe hardship to the farmers of western Canada.

Let us also consider the application of the Lift program. At the commencement of this scheme farmers were to receive somewhere between \$100 million and \$150 million. We now find that there has been only some \$55 million distributed under this program, resulting as well in huge administrative costs. In my own constituency some 40 per cent of the producers have participated in the Lift program. This program was, again, designed to help the large producer to the detriment of the small producer. Again we find in the program now being considered by the government another step toward the reduction in the number of small farm producers. This is spelled out very clearly. Obviously, this government wants to get rid of the small farm operation. This is also true of the farm adjustment and consolidation program announced some time ago by the minister.

We are frightened by these government policies because we envisage emerging from them a form of collective or communal-type farming. Under the adjustment program we will have more counselling and information services than we can shake a stick at. We will have rural counselling services, management farm services and agricultural adjustment services. The services provided by the farm adjustment program is different from the counselling provided by management specialists. Farmers need advice on how to maintain their small operations rather than having them taken over to facilitate the build-up of large entities. We envisage these programs as nothing more than a means of legislative merging. It becomes obvious that this government is dedicated to a program designed to eliminate the small farm.

There is no secret that there is a critical shortage of cash available to farmers in western Canada. We see the desperate shortage at this time when many producers are faced with heavy expenditures in respect of their planting and cultivating operations. Repayment of cash advances has caused them very severe hardship. I urged the minister to consider placing a moratorium on these advances until the movement of grain and sales were such that there would be sufficient capital generated to meet the advance payments, but the minister chose to embark upon another course.

• (3:10 p.m.)

With this measure we see a further strangulation of the small producer. Rather than his position being improved, we see any measurable benefit that was contained in the original legislation being removed. Under