

Supply—Agriculture

It appears that the price of machinery will continue to increase to the extent that the traffic will bear. Farmers in some areas have boycotted the buying of machinery and the implement companies have really found out the problem they face if they are not able to sell their machinery.

• (8:40 p.m.)

The minister told us how very wonderful it is that in 1966 the farmers of Canada borrowed \$234 million from the Farm Credit Corporation. This may sound to the minister like very good business, but I would point out that when farmers are in debt to this extent it is very, very difficult for them to repay loans. Every time a farmer borrows money in this way he has to repay the loan and the interest thereon. Thanks to the western members in the house in particular, and to the Conservative members in general, the interest was kept as low as possible on these loans.

I ask the minister whether he or anybody else in the house thinks that anybody is able to borrow himself rich. I cannot see it, myself. I was in debt for a great many years on the farm and know how difficult it is to meet even small payments, especially when a Liberal government is in power in Ottawa. That really makes a difference.

The reduction in the assistance provided under the Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Act is no help to western farmers in providing dug-outs and water supplies for the summer. In the part of the country from which I come people know that prairie farm assistance act is nearly over because in the last five years the trouble with it has been appalling. I am not laying all this trouble at the minister's feet, but he and I know where some of the trouble occurs. I can assure hon. members that it is not all the fault of the farmers or the act.

ARDA is a very wonderful idea that was brought into being by the minister of agriculture of the Conservative government, the hon. member for Qu'Appelle. The extension of ARDA has proved to be a very wonderful thing in some cases. I know that the program is now handled through the provincial departments of agriculture. There is one ARDA project in my constituency which anybody can be very proud of. I refer to the project on the Saddle Lake Indian reserve where 15,000 acres of wonderful land is about to be broken up and put into cultivation for the benefit of the people who live on the reserve. This project will prove to be of great assistance to

[Mr. Fane.]

these people in finding their feet. Therefore I commend the idea of ARDA. I know this project will prove of very great help to the Indian population of some 2,000 on this reserve.

My time appears to be up, Mr. Chairman. I do not know if I have been able to tie in my remarks with vote 5c, which reads as follows:

Administration, operation and maintenance—to extend the purposes of vote 5 of the main estimates for 1967-68 to include a contribution of \$10,000 to the town of Kapuskasing towards the construction of a road.

One dollar is provided for this vote. As I say, Mr. Chairman, I do not know how well I have related what I have had to say to that vote. Anyway I have said what I think should be said in this regard and hope I have been talking to the subject under consideration by the committee.

Mr. Alkenbrack: Mr. Chairman, there is one line in one of the verses of our national anthem "O Canada" which refers to our country as a "fair land of hope for all who toil". I ask the question: Who among us toils harder than the farmer? But under this government he toils without hope.

I shall be brief this evening in order to give the Minister of Agriculture the opportunity to attack the remarks made by the hon. member for Burnaby-Coquitlam, for to be consistent he must attack the leader of the New Democratic party as he attacked my leader, the leader of the official opposition, last night. The content of the comic opera attack by the Minister of Agriculture last night on the splendid speech and sound economics put forward by my leader could have been put to better use by the minister next spring on the flowerbeds of Arnprior.

Because of the importance of agriculture in the economy of my constituency, and indeed because of its importance to our whole country, I join the debate on these estimates at this time. As milk production is of great importance in our area, I now wish to touch upon that subject. I wish to protest the marked reduction of federal agricultural grants as they affect our dairy industry, and particularly the intended removal of the premiums on high scoring cheese by this government next April 1.

I wish to point out to the government that the cheese premiums were instituted as early as 1939 to encourage farmers to produce high quality milk, which in turn would improve over-all cheese quality. Payments have been