

The Address—Mr. Southam

the western panorama is most appropriate at this time. I would like to report a few simple facts, and I ask this house to endeavour to appreciate their human and social meaning.

The essential facts in the 1968-69 crop year were that our wheat and wheat flour exports fell to 304.3 million bushels. In context, this means that our sales level now only equals that of exactly one decade ago. Our sales are down 187 million bushels from the high of 591.6 million bushels in 1963-64. Further, a bitter companion of this truth is that the average price paid to farmers, per bushel, is now approximately \$1.50 compared with \$1.85 per bushel only a year ago. The direct economic result of this calamity is clear from DBS statistics which I quote as follows:

Farm Cash Receipts.

Preliminary estimates indicate that, during the first six months of 1969, farmers total cash receipts from farming operations in all provinces except Newfoundland, reached \$1,903.1 million, about 10 per cent below the revised value of \$2,134.6 million realized during the first half of 1968. Included in these estimates are cash receipts from the sale of farm products, Canadian Wheat Board participation payments on previous years' grain crops, net cash advances on farm-stored grains in western Canada, deficiency payments made by the Agricultural Stabilization Board and supplementary payments to dairy producers. No deduction was made for the cost incurred by farmers in the production of the commodities sold. Estimates of the expenses incurred in farming operations together with total farm income are published annually in the DBS publication "Farm Net Income".

I will not bore the house further with these statistics. They can be found in DBS catalogue number 21-202. Further, DBS statistics of September 26th state the following, which is of specific relevance to western Canada:

Reflecting the decline in the Canadian Wheat Board participation payments and receipts from the sale of wheat, farm cash receipts in the prairie provinces dropped appreciatively. This was most noticeable in Saskatchewan where receipts fell from \$512.1 million in 1968 to \$308.3 million this year, a decline of 39.8 per cent. For Alberta and Manitoba, the decline was 20.8 per cent and 13.6 per cent respectively. Cash receipts were higher in all other provinces with the highest percentage increase being exhibited by Nova Scotia with a gain of 17.4 per cent.

This is confirmed in newspaper headlines in western Canada. I have here a number of clippings with headlines such as: "Wheat Economy Deep in Crisis", "Outlook Said Dismal for Export of Wheat", "Agriculture Importance on Decline" and "Few Options Open for Farmers". A simple and very human reality follows which affects the lives of every citizen in the linchpin provinces of Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta. Whole

communities and thousands of families are anticipating bankruptcy. The inadequate quota of five bushels per acre, at inadequate prices, means that western farmers are now \$65 million in debt to the federal treasury in the 1967-68 cash advances. There is no need to speak of this any further, but there is a need, indeed an obligation—and considering the present government, a challenge—to argue that the crisis of western Canada requires new, bold and successful national responses.

The Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) has spoken with some eloquence and with a rare kind of passion about order and unity in our society. I am here to help in my way. However, I warn the Prime Minister and his government that the bedrock foundation of social and political harmony is composed little, if at all, of statutes or rhetoric. For instance, lowering the voting age and legislation on wire-tapping is not an answer to western agricultural problems. Frankly, the west will not be a place of genteel and high-minded dialogue that is forgotten while her economy is casually being undermined. A cavalier and shoddy attitude has been the hallmark of this government's approach to western Canada, and what is more important, this seems likely to continue unless the government deserts its oriental fatalism and finds an *élan* for constructive reform in agriculture. These are my conclusions about the present government, but I do not state them for political advantage. There are no meaningful points to be scored on past behaviour. I am most concerned about the behaviour of the government next year. It is here that I look for reform.

There may well be an economic catastrophe if no change is made. As a citizen and as a politician I do not welcome such a catastrophe. Inadequate sales and falling prices are a cause of trouble. This inadequacy continues to plague us in the House, and it is caused by the fatalism of this government. One has only to quote the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce (Mr. Pepin) when he announced on September 25 the sale of 86.2 million bushels of wheat to the People's Republic of China in the following manner:

This sale to China is very gratifying. But I must caution the farmers, and the public, against being overly optimistic about export volume this year. Exporting and importing countries in the northern hemisphere have had good wheat crops. Thus we have no reason to believe at this time that our exports will be much larger than last year.