

*Economic Conditions in Rural Communities*

● (4:20 p.m.)

We are here, I believe, to draft a scheme of things for the Canada of the future, a scheme of things which will bring to that Canada a standard of justice which shall place human values above dollar values, a scheme of things that will provide for our fighting heroes when they return a standard of national viewpoint which shall not only recognize, as you have publicly stated, Mr. Prime Minister, but which shall further decree, that that which is physically desirable is financially possible.

Judging from the events which occurred in Canada since then, I note that the recommendations made during the federal-provincial conferences are far from being implemented. We would rather go on floundering in the stupid system of today, making every effort through every possible means to deprive the Canadian citizens, through a variety of taxes, from the revenue they need with the resulting disorganization of farming, unemployment, unpaid and unpayable public debts of municipal, school, provincial and federal governments. And I do not think that the solution to the many Canadian problems will be found with such small constitutional reforms as we have been witnessing for too long.

What we need is a true monetary reform which would take into account the needs of the people and would allow for an intelligent and just distribution of the abundant production which is available to us.

If we go on looking for solutions along tracks already beaten by selfish financiers we run the risk of finding ourselves all in designated areas where Canadians will be numbered, classified, taxed and riddled with debts and asking themselves with anguish when they will be integrated, disclassified, retrained or nationalized. There are indeed enough examples to incite us to direct our decisions towards a better end.

[*English*]

**Hon. H. A. Olson (Minister of Agriculture):** Mr. Speaker, I welcome this opportunity to make a few remarks about agricultural policy and the development of that policy over the past few months. I think, however, that the composition of this motion again demonstrates the ingenuity of the opposition and, particularly, of the hon. member for Peace River (Mr. Baldwin) to be negative and destructive, to initiate and perpetuate a myth, to ignore the facts and to continue to widen the credibility gap between his party and the Canadian citizen.

**Mr. Alexander:** Six hundred and thirty-eight thousand are unemployed.

**Mr. Olson:** That is unfortunate, Mr. Speaker. The motion provides me with an opportunity to discuss some developments in the area of agricultural policy and program changes which have taken place during the past few months. Before I embark on those comments, I suppose I ought to reply briefly to the main theme brought forward by opposition spokesmen who have so far participated in the debate. It seems to me that the comments of the hon. member for Red Deer (Mr. Thompson) bore very little relevance to the wording of the motion. At one point he tried to suggest that the government ought to stop making proposals to the Canadian people by way of white papers and that sort of thing.

[Mr. Dionne.]

**Mr. Thompson:** I did not say that.

**Mr. Olson:** He is very, very wrong indeed if he thinks that he can, either by that speech or any other way, persuade the government to stop putting proposals before the people and asking them to respond to those proposals before coming out with hard and fast positions. We began some time ago this very useful process of consultation with the people of Canada. We have done this so that we shall not "govern by surprise". The people of Canada accept that as good policy. That is part of the process of the development of policy and it is a process which we intend to continue.

**Mr. Thompson:** It is a good process so long as the proposals are proper.

**Mr. Olson:** Next, I refer to the comments of the hon. member for Saskatoon-Biggar (Mr. Gleave). I am sorry that he did not have time to stay and listen to this important debate on agriculture.

**Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege.

**Mr. Olson:** Mr. Speaker, there is no privilege here; the hon. member is not in the House, and that is all I have said.

**Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** Mr. Speaker—

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order, please. Will both hon. members please resume their seats? The hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre.

**Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** Mr. Speaker, I am rising on a question of privilege and to ask the minister if he is not aware of the fact that the Canadian Federation of Agriculture is meeting with our caucus at the present time, and that that is why the hon. member for Saskatoon-Biggar (Mr. Gleave) is not here? I stayed here in case something like this was tried.

**Mr. Olson:** Mr. Speaker, I am also aware that whenever there is not one particular minister in the House, no matter how valid the reason for his absence may be, the hon. member gets up and comments about it. He always draws the attention of the House to that fact and decries it.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear.

**Mr. Olson:** I think that the members of the NDP, who are so good at this sort of thing, ought to be reminded that only one of their members is present in the House while the debate on agricultural policy is taking place.

**Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** You will admit that he is a pretty good one, though.

**Mr. Olson:** Oh, yes; he is a good member, although he might not be very good at agriculture.

I think that the hon. member for Saskatoon-Biggar ought to get his facts straight before perpetuating the kind of myth he tried to bring before the House respecting what has happened during the past 12 or 18 months.