

*Government Orders*

call it an exchange—it is not a fair trade—the provinces will pay half of the premiums, which comes to a heck of a lot more than half of the administration costs. This was a bad deal for the provinces. This does not resemble one-third/one-third/and one-third to me. The provinces got sucked in on a bad deal. But, of course, considering the fact that the four western provinces have Tory governments one can expect them to be suckers with their so-called sound business practice. The provinces just should have said, no, on day one.

• (1310)

The program of crop insurance is, in effect, being eroded. Farmers are in no position to pay higher premiums. The provinces and the municipalities on the prairies, and I suspect the same is true in central and eastern Canada, are having enough trouble as it is. This is the stupidest time of all to try to bring in these kinds of changes. It was a struggle over the years to get crop insurance which people could afford.

Some special assistance for spring seeding has been mentioned. That is what we went through in the years when I was just a kid, growing up. The special assistance was for seed grain. There was hardly a quarter section of land in Saskatchewan without a lien or a caveat on it for seed grain debts. It was not until 1944 under Tommy Douglas that the province took those debts for seed grain off the backs of farmers and took the relief payments off the backs of municipalities. These had been piling up for years.

There has been much talk about some kind of a national disaster fund for agriculture. This is a good idea whose time has not come, and will not come under this government. We have crop insurance and that covers the dealings we have with Mother Nature. She decides and there ain't a darn thing we can do about it. So we try to protect ourselves collectively: the farmers, the provinces and the federal government.

There was the income stabilization bill, which was designed to protect farmers from the vagaries of the market. There are those who would say that we have to have a free and open market system. It is free and open, but it ain't free for farmers. All farmers have had is price lowering. The income stabilization program was designed to protect them from the vicissitudes of the

market. You had a combination of two things, to try to provide a measure of stability and insurance. They both are essentially insurance programs to which the farmers contribute and contribute handsomely.

Now we need a third one. We need some kind of insurance for agriculture, generally, to protect the farmers from this kind of government. Anybody stupid enough to make these kinds of changes in the crop insurance program, in light of the conditions that our farmers are in, has to be some kind of congenital idiot or else just plain ignorant and stupid. I do not know if there is any difference in those, but I cannot judge it any other way. It was working, it needed some improvements, and it still does; nobody is arguing about that. We will all work and discuss improvements that we can bring in over the coming months and years.

There is an area that I have always felt strongly about. I like to go hunting for goose, duck, sharp-tailed grouse and Hungarian partridge and I have always felt that people like me in Canada—and there are a few million—should make a contribution to the cost of conservation of wildlife, but also to the cost to the agricultural community from wildlife crop loss and damage.

I do not know what the situation is right now. I tried to get an answer from the Minister of Agriculture one day last week. I know for years a portion of my hunting licence fees went to this very thing. Some went to wildlife preservation and some went towards wildlife crop damage. That was always separate from crop insurance but I think it should be included.

Those who go hunting and fishing should make a contribution, although I do not know of any fish that are damaging our crop—we do not have any rain. That is an area which needs to be included in the crop insurance program. I, as an ordinary citizen and one who likes to hunt and enjoy the outdoors, am perfectly willing to make a contribution towards the cost of that kind of protection for our agricultural producers.

I have seen what 12,000 or 15,000 Canada geese and 5,000 or 6,000 sand-hill cranes can do in an 80 acre field of swath. You have a pretty large mess and I have seen what can happen. Many efforts have been made by Ducks Unlimited, by municipalities and provincial governments to provide lure crops, safe habitat and feeding