

Supply—Agriculture

measure under estimate 604 in September of 1961 in co-operation with the provincial governments. That is why I asked the minister this afternoon whether he had already received applications from provincial governments for co-operative freight assistance on a 50-50 basis so as to provide certain moneys to pay for the freight in moving grain dryers and other farm equipment in order to cope with this emergency.

My fourth suggestion is the immediate distribution of emergency instructions on how to handle these dryers properly and on the drying of grain. This will have to be done through the public relations branches of the departments of agriculture, both federal and provincial, and passed on to the farmers so they will be more certain that they are doing a good job of grain drying and so the grain will be saleable and ready when there is a market for it.

My fifth suggestion is that we consider declaring a moratorium for one year where needed on loans due under the Farm Improvement Loans Act, the Farm Machinery Syndicates Credit Act, and Farm Credit Act. If we could do this in the face of this emergency, farmers would feel they could use some of the money that would normally be used to meet these obligations and could band together co-operatively to provide themselves with the equipment needed to do this drying operation and thus overcome the problem from this angle.

I could go on at some length but I am sure other hon. members want to take part in this debate. However, I suggest the matter is very urgent and I am sure that after the minister has had a chance to listen to various hon. members this afternoon and after what went on in our committee this morning, he will be impressed with the urgency of the matter. I strongly urge that the actions which I have suggested and the suggestions which will be made by other hon. members be considered by the minister at once to meet this very serious problem that we are now facing in western Canada.

[Translation]

Mr. Corbin: Mr. Chairman, what I have to say may not seem so important to hon. members if one considers that I am no expert in agricultural matters. However, I conscientiously believe that I have to say these things, because they are important, vital and crucial for the people I represent in a special way

in the house. Furthermore, being a professional newspaperman, I am not used to taking part in parliamentary debates.

As a newspaperman, I have always been concerned about what was happening at home in the field of agriculture. That is why I will say, as simply as I can, what I want to bring to the attention of the minister and hon. members.

However, with your permission, I shall make a general comment by saying that I see the problem of the potato farmer—and, at this point, I take a chance of being told that I am all wet—in the context of farming in general and in the context of national and international economy. If we take any farm problem out of this overall context, we may follow a course which could lead us into error.

● (5:40 p.m.)

Evidently, this problem must be considered analytically, positively and with an open mind. It is easy to condemn the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Olson) and the federal and provincial governments for not carrying out their responsibilities with regard to agriculture. I have yet to hear members of this house say that the farmers themselves should be blamed for not considering their problems seriously and for neglecting to maintain the quality of their products. In this connection, I want to show one example, although it is related to the potato growers in my own region.

The other day, in the course of a friendly reunion, I met here in Ottawa some people who had left New Brunswick some ten years ago. I was told that they insist on buying New Brunswick potatoes. Unfortunately, after buying bags of potatoes grown in my region, they were disappointed to find that the quality of the potatoes was definitely inferior to that normally expected.

I was told also that the Prince Edward Island potatoes are quite satisfactory to them from a quality standpoint. I am not trying to advertise for Prince Edward Island, but this is a fact. Once again, this illustrates that farmers are not always conscientious in marketing satisfactory products. Those are things that must be said even at the risk of not being appreciated on the political plane. As far as I am concerned, I take my responsibilities, and I believe that all farmers should take theirs. Particularly, they should not try to evade the regulations to put on the market products that are not suitable.