

Agricultural Stabilization Act

we take a look at the world food shortage today, the truth is that we do not have a world food shortage in the general sense. What we have is a world protein shortage. If we had a mythical distribution system, something like the one we run in Canada, that could give food to all peoples around the world equally, we would have barely enough carbohydrate to go around, and certainly a shortfall of a considerable amount of protein.

Going back to the situation of so many young children in Africa, everyone who has ever watched a teenaged boy or girl eat food does not need to be reminded that the intake of protein increases by almost 50 per cent when you reach your teenage years. Africa is a continent which cannot supply its population now and 55 per cent of its population is pre-teenage. The need for world food doesn't need to be underscored. When we come to the purport of this legislation we are certainly going to find out that it falls far short of giving the kind of incentives to farmers to produce in the way in which this world demands.

● (2150)

I am going to give one last example, because certainly my time will run out tonight before the issues of this legislation are exhausted. I want to bring home dramatically the importance of the need to produce food at a level which is accelerated to the absolute maximum. Just recently when the country of Chad was experiencing the most severe drought ever experienced in the world, a great epidemic of diphtheria broke out. As a result of that epidemic the World Health Organization of the United Nations made an offer to send vaccine for diphtheria and the government of Chad responded by saying "No, do not send that vaccine because diphtheria is an easier death for our children than starvation." I think this underscores the need to develop a policy that is not simply ad hoc but actually accelerates agricultural production in this country to a level unlike any we have ever experienced.

The United States National Academy of Science says that by the year 2025 there will be one million child deaths a month, and that also we will have a shortfall within five years from now of 51.9 million tons of cereal grain per year. Let's take a look at some of the situations which relate to the agricultural bill, and at some of the shortfalls that we are going to find in terms of incentives to farmers.

The first thing that we ought to be demanding when we take a look at any agricultural measure today is a bill that in fact encourages farmers to produce, and the way you do that is you pay them. This bill does only this. It talks only in terms of paying people, of giving more payment, but without having direct relationship—unless the cabinet should happen to decide otherwise, which is certainly as the previous speaker mentioned a very political decision—to link payment with the cost of production. Unless there is some kind of guarantee that the farmer is going to be paid, and paid well, then there can never be the concept of a professional farmer. I think it should interest all members of this House to note the fact that agriculture, wherever it is, has been treated as the bottom man on the totem pole. In every country in the world where we find nations existing on an agricultural economy, they are amongst the poorest of all nations, and when you take a look at the industrial nations the agricultural areas in them are the poorest areas.

[Mr. Malone.]

I think we might first take a look at this bill by citing the example of the fellow who started to drink to steady his nerves; finally he drank so much that he got so steady he couldn't move. And that's exactly what the limits in this kind of bill can do. We are talking about stabilization, but in fact what we really ought to be looking at is the kind of government incentive that speaks about getting food into the international market, with some thrust to get food to where it is needed. And if there were a tremendous drive to get Canadian food into the international market place then we wouldn't have to spend all of our time talking about stabilizing it here, because the fact of the matter is that we can stabilize these markets into such stability that they won't move. Once we start getting markets so stable that they won't move we have a situation in which the farmer is locked in, just as surely as he is locked in today, because of the failure in getting his product to market. There is certainly a failure in getting his product into the international market place. There can be no doubt about that. There just is not enough incentive to get his product into the international market place.

If the government is really sincere in its attempt to try to put some stabilization into the farming economy, there are some other things it could be doing that would make a tremendous difference. In the last couple of days of debate we heard some accusations made back and forth across the House about racism. Well, I say to the Minister of Transport (Mr. Marchand) that I would like to challenge him with a real race issue. I would like to challenge him with a race issue that is of tremendous importance, and makes a tremendous difference to the agricultural stabilization of this country. The fact is that it takes 28 days for a rail train loaded with grain from my constituency to reach the port in Vancouver. That averages out, Madam Speaker, to three and a half miles an hour. Despite all that talk about racism and racing, and getting food to market, I can walk twice that fast. I will challenge him any day to get that grain to Vancouver. He can use his trains and I will walk with the grain.

We are talking about international markets and the very inadequate way in which we try to get grain to them, but the fact remains that we have rail systems that are tied up by strikes, and the trains themselves are moving at an average of three and a half miles an hour.

The other thing I would like to say, as my time is drawing to an end, is that the agricultural industry ought no longer to bear the brunt of strikes. There is no example in the business world where two people go into negotiations, incur a loss, and then charge that loss to a third party. Yet in the Port of Vancouver during the recent grain handlers' strike what happened there was that management and labour caused something like \$70 million of demurrage charges to accumulate, and charged them to the farmers. I think the farm organizations of this country ought to sue the federal government, because there is no situation in the business world in which two people who enter into some kind of a business deal and then incur a loss can charge that loss to a third party.

I think that kind of jeopardy which exists in this country ought not to be allowed because it is absolutely illegal. I see it is ten o'clock. May I call it such?

Some hon. Members: Question.