

Farm Machinery Prices

that can and in fact are being done to assist the farming industry.

That is about all I wish to say, but I want to conclude by suggesting, and I am sure many hon. Members on this side of the House will associate themselves with me in this belief, that I appreciate the sentiment and goodwill behind the motion moved by the hon. Member for Humboldt-Melfort-Tisdale (Mr. Rapp). That is one way of approaching this serious problem, but I hope that by my remarks I have to some extent shown that the problem is much broader and much more complex than would appear to be the case as reflected in the narrow, and I use that word in the sense of a specific approach, concept the hon. Member has mentioned.

Mr. Enns: Mr. Speaker, would the hon. Member permit a question?

Mr. Honey: Yes.

Mr. Enns: In his earlier remarks the hon. Member quoted some statistics to show how much money had been lent to farmers under the provisions of the Act sponsored by this Liberal Government. Would the hon. Member not agree that statistics regarding the increased amount of money lent to farmers does not show the whole picture? If ten tractors cost \$20,000 ten years ago, there would be an entry of \$20,000 in the statistical table, and if this year the same ten tractors cost \$40,000, a comparison of the amounts of loans would not give a complete picture and might be misleading.

Mr. Honey: Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. Member has misunderstood me. I do not recall quoting any statistics to that effect. What I did say was, and I have not got the exact figures and suggest that the hon. Member check *Hansard* in this regard, that in the last four years there has been a shift in the relative cost of farm operations. Again I suggest the hon. Member check me by reading *Hansard* in this regard, but during the ten years after the war the greatest expense to a farmer related to farm machinery; but that expense has shifted so that, relatively speaking, labour and other costs of farm operations are taking more of the farmers' dollars today than machinery costs. I think those were the only statistics in that context which I used, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Harold E. Winch (Vancouver East): Mr. Speaker, I shall be as brief as possible, but there are one or two pertinent points I want to raise. The hon. Member in moving

this motion has brought a most important and serious matter to the attention of this House. However, I do not think the hon. Member meant exactly what his motion says. It reads:

That, in the opinion of this House, the Government should consider the advisability of appointing a Royal Commission to investigate the increased costs of farm machinery across Canada in relation to the price of farm products.

Surely what the hon. Member had in mind is not the relationship between the costs of farm machinery and the price of farm products, but rather the price of farm machinery in Canada. If that is tied in with the price of farm products, it does not mean the same thing. I may be wrong, but I take it the major question in the mind of the mover of this motion relates to the increase in the cost of farm machinery to the agriculturists of Canada.

• (5:40 p.m.)

I agree completely that this is a matter that should be of immediate concern, study and report. Unfortunately there is a great deal of misunderstanding as to the base of the cost of farm machinery. I have read article after article in this regard. I have talked to farmer after farmer and they all have the idea that the increased cost of farm machinery has been brought about because of increased labour costs. Steel is the basic material that goes into the production of farm machinery, and investigation will prove that the increased wages and fringe benefits given over the years to those working in the steel industry have not added to the cost of farm machinery, because the increase in production per man hour in that industry has more than compensated for the increased wages and fringe benefits of the workers.

There is another important aspect to the cost of farm machinery with regard to which we run into a problem, brought about by the fact that there are those who believe in the capitalist system of free enterprise and competition. The fact is that many different types of machinery are produced by different firms but all these machines are designed to do the same job. What is the result? Farm machinery costs are sky high because the supplier has to keep on hand parts for so many different types of machinery produced by so many different companies. If hon. Members sincerely want to reduce the cost of farm machinery they are going to have to decide to accept standardization based on the most efficient equipment to do the job. If that were done, carburetors,