

the farming industry across Canada, it would have been desirable to seriously consider appointing a Minister of State responsible for eastern Agriculture. I believe the members from Ontario, the Maritimes and Quebec would appreciate such a measure.

And if some day the Minister of Agriculture happened to be from eastern Canada, I believe the western provinces would then be entitled to have a representative who would be called the Minister of State for Western Agriculture.

Of course, in the present context this would enable eastern Canada to be represented as it is entitled to have a voice in the ministers' council on account of the importance of its population and consumption. This would also give the Minister of Agriculture not only an adviser but a direct associate when the time comes for discussing estimates in the cabinet.

The idea was hailed, I believe, by the eastern producers, just as it would probably be by the western producers: once again, it is not a matter of dividing a national legislation. On the contrary. To my mind, by giving responsibilities to one more man, bearing in mind the difficulties and problems existing in the field of agriculture, two heads would be better than one. This has long since been recognized. That would be one way of improving the farming situation. Surely, the government will seriously consider setting up that type of department in the interest of both the Eastern and western farmers.

As a representative of the province of Quebec, I feel that Quebecers experienced many difficulties last year. Indeed, pork producers and egg producers experienced serious difficulties.

I know also that potato growers have been forced to sell their last crop at ridiculous prices.

As for dairy producers, they find themselves in a rather favourable situation now compared with the previous two or three years.

As for tobacco producers, most of whom are in my region, they have now no serious ground for complaint.

I know also that a number of vegetable growers are experiencing difficulties because of the lack of well organized marketing, definitely because of the policy which has prevailed for a very long time, the law of supply and demand, according to which prices fall when crops are plentiful and increase when there is a shortage. No doubt, this does not favour the protection of the consumer.

I supported Bill C-176 because I thought that the national marketing agencies for farm products could bring about a well organized marketing, which could support adequate prices. And if, after establishing such marketing boards, it should be impossible to obtain reasonable prices, the government would have to pass some legislation designed to set a basic price, if we truly want to give the farmers the same safeguards that the workers enjoy today in many industries.

In my view, the farmer is always worried about the future, because of a lack of legislative measures and of programs offering him some protection. I know that some producers in some provinces have crop insurance. That is

Farm Credit Act

not good enough, whatever one may say. The Canadian farmer is entitled to safeguards, as the worker is entitled to the safeguards provided by the unions, which enable him to breathe freely and to sleep fairly well. The same cannot be said of the farmers, even today, and yet that industry has been around for a long time both in Canada and throughout the world.

I am confident that with goodwill and positive comments, we shall succeed in making the government aware of the problem so that it will introduce increasingly better pieces of legislation for the sole purpose of granting to each producer, who has the right to dream, adequate safeguards which he may enjoy as much as the worker.

• (1650)

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to show the government the difficulties met for instance by landless producers.

We are quite aware that the feed grain policy was discussed in one part of the country but that it can also be accepted in another. One thing for sure, however, producers throughout Canada certainly have the right to get feed grain at the same rate. And upon such consideration I invite the government, for the tenth time maybe, to seriously consider legislation along that line. This is not easy, I admit.

I had the opportunity of listening to many comments made within the Committee on Agriculture where there is good will and good faith. But must we think that because it is difficult the problem should not be dealt with? And should we accept that producers in some areas of this country be definitely forced to pay more for feed grains in order to turn out the same product?

I venture to believe that in all fairness it is the government's responsibility to introduce as promptly as possible legislation allowing all landless producers—I refer to producers of eggs and fowl, who have had and are still experiencing problems—as well as hog producers to buy feed grains at equal prices. This would allow them to compete on an equal basis with producers in other regions and the legislation could really be called fair. I hope the government will give this particular consideration.

I make this representation, knowing that the Quebec Millers Association has submitted briefs and that hon. members from the east of the country are most anxious to have these changes brought about, in view of the situation of producers in their area. Hon. members from the west are well acquainted with the matter I am now dealing with and certainly hon. members from the east always unhesitatingly supported grants to western regions when they were in trouble. We know this cost the federal government millions of dollars. However, these people needed help and I believe hon. members were quite justified in voting for grants in their behalf.

Quebec benefited by some advantages regarding the Canadian Dairy Commission. For instance, that province received grants of \$50 million from the Canadian Dairy Commission. The province of Quebec also receives \$10 million for the transportation of feed grains to Quebec.

I give these figures because I must be honest enough to disagree when some people say that the Quebec minister of agriculture has done nothing. I think these remarks