

*Supply—Agriculture*

There are many parts of the agricultural industry in need of support and assistance. I was happy to hear the Minister of Finance announce last night that some consideration would be given to protection for the fruit and vegetable industry which certainly needs protection. In my own riding seven canning factories have closed their doors in the last two years. This has meant that the people in the area have had to go into some other line of production. These factories did not close down because of inefficient operation or because there were too many canning factories. They were closed because of the importation of products from abroad that can be sold in Canada at prices cheaper than those for which they can be produced in this country. This occurred in various parts of Ontario and caused a serious problem in many areas. We heartily welcomed the announcement that some consideration would be given to this matter.

The dairy farmers are facing problems as well. They have experienced some surpluses but I believe the surplus position in the dairy industry is only about two per cent which is not alarming in my opinion and it will probably right itself. I believe the dairy people themselves should give further study and thought to their position. They should work toward a pooling program through which they could assist themselves to a greater extent than has been the case to date. I have been talking about this in farm organizations for the past ten years and my ideas have received the support of many people. If we had a pooling of all our dairy products at this time there would be no problem in the industry. The dairy farmers could produce for a market capable of absorbing the produce.

I do not think that any farmer in Canada today wants assistance from any government. What the farmer wants is an opportunity to compete and place himself in the same position as those engaged in other industries in our economy. We have heard much criticism of the subsidies given to agriculture. I would point out that industry has been protected through protective tariffs for years. I endorse that because I feel that if industries did not have some protection many plants would close down because of competition from other countries. Our standard of living is such that we cannot effectively compete with countries that have a considerably lower standard. I do not think anyone in Canada would wish to see our standard lowered. Those engaged in agriculture are deserving of the same opportunities and protection given to other segments of our economy.

[Mr. Milligan.]

We should be very concerned about the family farm. To my way of thinking it is one of the most important aspects of our rural communities. A United States congressman, Clifford Hope, was recently reported in the press as saying:

The strength of our rural communities will always depend upon the strength of our farm families. Thus all of our efforts, government or private, should be directed toward building up the family-type of farm. I believe that the strength of this country rests more than any other place on the economic, moral and spiritual condition of the people on our farms. If this is true, it imposes a tremendous responsibility on all of us.

I agree that each of us, regardless of where we sit in this house and regardless of the position we hold, must acknowledge that agriculture has its rightful place in the economy of this country and accept the responsibilities attendant on this knowledge.

**Mr. Martin (Timmins):** Mr. Chairman, I was very pleased that the Minister of Agriculture today was followed by the hon. member for Prince Edward-Lennox. It provided an excellent contrast. I enjoyed hearing the hon. member for Prince Edward-Lennox who both in this house and in the committee on agriculture and colonization has demonstrated on many occasions his complete and comprehensive knowledge of farm problems, particularly as they apply in the province of Ontario. It was gratifying to note that some of the opinions expressed by the Minister of Agriculture were not fully shared by all hon. members on the government side of the house.

The picture painted by the minister and by certain other spokesmen on the government side gives cause for considerable concern. Within the period of the last two months various delegations representing farm organizations have visited Ottawa including the interprovincial farm union council, the federation of agriculture, the Ontario farmers union, representatives of the milk producers, and others. Most of the briefs they have presented have been well documented and certainly they tended to depict a situation somewhat different from that depicted today by the minister. Invariably these briefs were supported by an impressive array of statistics and figures and were presented by extremely capable men. The farm unions have been most fortunate over the years in being able to develop leaders who can present their cases with great clarity and sincerity.

If we were to believe what the minister said today in describing the position of agriculture we could only assume that the presentations made by the various organizations to which I have referred were deliberate attempts to mislead all hon. members of this house. There is no other assumption