

*Supply—Agriculture*

be raised ten cents per bushel. In April, 1962 about \$125 million was paid out to grain producers. This, again, was the actual proceeds from the sale of the 1960-61 crop. Not a cent of subsidy or handout here.

So, Mr. Chairman, far from being even faintly humorous, the suggestion with respect to buying the farmers' vote in western Canada is a gross misrepresentation of fact and must be dealt with as such. The fact remains that the Minister of Agriculture and all the Conservative members from western Canada have contributed to this false image. They went about the country—and I do not think any one of them will deny it—praising their minister, praising their Prime Minister and in fact instilling in the minds of all people in Canada other than farmers that they were giving them anything and everything they could—at the expense of the rest of Canada, of course.

Even the Prime Minister had this to say, as reported at page 75 of *Hansard*:

I saw the Leader of the Opposition on election night, Mr. Speaker, when he believed he was going to be occupying this seat. That is before the western farmer came in.

Then this is what he says further down:

That is the best evidence that could possibly be given of the fact that under this government the farmers of Canada have at long last received reasonable consideration.

So they are continuing to perpetuate this image that they are in fact giving better treatment to the western farmers than the other people of Canada. Let us look at some of the facts that have been published by the dominion bureau of statistics with respect to farm income. To be fair to the minister and to the western members opposite I think we should use the figures for the period immediately preceding the election campaign; in other words, from January to March, inclusive, 1962. On page 105 of this publication dealing with cash income from the sale of farm products in Canada by commodity, for January to March, 1962 we find wheat, \$66 million, and the year before, \$82 million. So it was actually down. I do not blame the minister or the Conservative party altogether for this, because there was a drought and there were fewer bushels. But then we look further down and find that in 1961 the Canadian wheat board paid out \$37,750,000 during this three months period. In 1962 it was reduced to only \$17,000. Mr. Chairman, I believe there might have been a deliberate attempt on the part of the government to withhold this money for that period so they could pay it out just before the election. The total cash income from the sale of crops during this period was \$189 million, as opposed to \$270 million before. So certainly no

[Mr. Olson.]

one can honestly say that there was an increase in their farm cash income.

Now let us look at the cost of production during this same period. I have another bulletin issued by the dominion bureau of statistics—I do not see the date on it—which deals with the cost price index of commodities and services used by farmers to April, 1962. The index is based on 100 equal to the 1935-39 period. In April of 1959 the index of commodities and services used by farmers stood at 273. In April, 1961 it was up to 284, and in April, 1962 it was at a level of 291. I think this indicates clearly that while the cash income had dropped substantially, the cost of operation had gone up substantially. Therefore how can anyone, with justice, say that the farmers were getting a better deal in 1962 than they did before? There is one other thing to which I should like to refer, and that is the speech the minister made in Regina about two weeks ago. I believe that in addition to having created this image that the farmers are so much better off, the fact that he is now asking for some of the payments for wheat to be put into a fund to shoulder some of the responsibility for credit risks is another step in abandoning the responsibility of this government toward the farmers. The minister said this in his speech:

It is not an easy or simple matter to attain approval for these credit levels and I must advise you that it will become infinitely more difficult to obtain approval for higher levels.

I suggest that if it is true that the minister is having these so-called increasing problems, it is a direct result of his own propaganda campaign. Mr. Chairman, I would like to go back briefly to see just what is the historical position of the western Canada wheat farmers in relation to the deals they have had from various governments, and what justification there is for them now to ask the government to continue supporting them to some extent. The hon. member for Bow River said there was a loss of somewhere near \$600 million on the British wheat agreement. He said others had considered it was more like \$300 million. I did a little work on this, with the co-operation of the dominion bureau of statistics, and I found that in the crop year of 1946-47, 125 million bushels were sold to Britain under that agreement. The 125 million bushels were sold at a price of \$1.58 per bushel. The sales outside of the agreement, or the world price, if you like, were at \$2.44 a bushel, so there was a loss of 86 cents a bushel, for a total of \$107,930,000. In 1947-48 the difference between the British wheat agreement price and the world price was \$1.30 a bushel. There were 122 million bushels sold that year, so the prairie farmer suffered a loss of \$158,600,000 in that crop year. In the 1948-49 crop year