

The Address—Mr. Fane

basis as is the case at the present time. In 1958 when I came here payments were made on a basis of 18 sections in a rectangular block. I can assure anybody and everybody that when disasters occur involving farm land, whether due to hail or drought or any other cause, they do not happen in a rectangular block of 12 sections or more. I say that prairie farm assistance should be available to areas of one section and that assistance should not be limited to rectangular blocks of 12 sections.

Farmers are hit very hard too by the tight money policy of the present government. It is difficult for a farmer to borrow money from the chartered banks. In fact, it is extremely difficult now unless a man has established credit over many years and the banks do not consider him to be a farmer any more. Even though at the present time a farmer who has everything going right for him is able to borrow up to \$85,000 in loans supported by the government, there are in practice mighty few who can do this.

The time has come when the Prairie Farm Assistance Act should be put completely out of business. It is time for a new, over-all crop insurance act to be put into effect throughout Canada. Provision for such an act was made by the Conservative government some years ago. In Manitoba and Saskatchewan some use has been made of it. In Alberta last year, for the first time, three relatively small areas were provided with over-all crop insurance.

As to the cost of this insurance, I cannot say what it would be exactly; it would certainly be more than the 1 per cent which western farmers pay now under the Prairie Farm Assistance Act. On the other hand, coverage would be greater and the premium would not be more than the hail insurance premiums in the areas which are concerned. In the area where I farm the hail insurance premium is 10 per cent; it costs \$1 to get \$10 coverage. This is the only way to my mind in which the Prairie Farm Assistance Act can be replaced and allow farmers to profit by the insurance they have taken out. Prairie farm assistance is a type of insurance, even though it has been greatly changed since it was brought into being some 36 years ago.

• (4:30 p.m.)

I should also like to bring the price of farm machinery and repairs to the attention of the minister. Machinery and repair prices are out of all reason and out of all relationship with the prices that the farmers get for their products. Fancy, Mr. Speaker, in 1944 I

bought a 16 foot combine for \$3,200. That same combine now, with a little more streamlining, a little thinner tin on it and with greater operating speed, costs \$11,000. The price of wheat has not gone up. What cost approximately 3,000 bushels of wheat in 1944 now costs approximately 11,000 bushels of wheat. This is certainly out of all reason and the government should do something about keeping these prices related to the prices farmers get for their products.

Somewhere in its platform the Liberal party proposed unemployment insurance for farm labourers. This is something that is very necessary and should be attended to at the earliest possible moment because it is so difficult to get people to work on farms. They are not willing to work on farms because they have no assurance of having anything to live on should they lose their jobs.

I note that the Speech from the Throne states that the benefits available under the Farm Credit Corporation are to be raised. This corporation performs a much needed service for the farmers and now, everything being right, a farmer can borrow up to \$55,000 at interest rates of 5 per cent, 5½ per cent and rising to 6¾ per cent. This is all to the good. If a farmer thinks he has a hope in the world of repaying such a loan that is fine. The Farm Credit Corporation people look after that; they advise him and attend to his future.

However, it has been brought to my attention many times that during the last two or three years the cost of legal fees for processing Farm Credit Corporation loans has doubled and even in many cases quadrupled. That does not seem right. It is something which should be examined. The farmers who have to borrow money are very disturbed about it.

There is great discrimination against farmers who deliver grain to delivery points on the Canadian Pacific Railway lines. Did you know, Mr. Speaker, that on the Canadian Pacific line which goes through my constituency many of the delivery points did not have any delivery quota for grain one month ago other than the initial 300 bushels. Yet delivery points on the C.N.R. line 20 miles away could take five, six, and seven bushels per cultivated acre. That is a bad state of affairs and has resulted because the C.P.R. apparently does not care very much about transporting carload lots of wheat, something it is forced to do under the Crowsnest freight agreement.