

Wheat Export Prices

Bureau dated April 18, 1969, which concluded with these very strong words:

At the risk of being repetitious, we feel we cannot overemphasize the seriousness of the immediate situation of some Manitoba farmers. We appeal to you for some means of short term assistance such as a transfer payment which will allow these people to literally survive until effective readjustment programs can be implemented.

The Prime Minister went west last week to discover this fact, although it had before him and members of the government for several months. To put it in specific terms, I think one of the best presentations that came across my desk, and I am sure the desks of other hon. members, was from the Canadian Federation of Agriculture. It is dated May 28. I wish to read to hon. members, who still apparently think what we are dealing with is related to an international agricultural crisis and not an emergency that has been described by several members in the debate as putting the grain producers of western Canada in a hopeless and impossible financial situation.

The situation was described last May 28 by the Canadian Federation of Agriculture as follows:

The income position of many prairie grain farmers is clearly disastrous. Deliveries of wheat to prairie country elevators are running (April 23) 84 million bushels less than the previous year to the same time. The previous year's deliveries ('67-'68) were in turn down 158 million bushels from 1966-'67. It is clear that the two-year drop in annual deliveries ('66-'67 to '68-'69) will reach from 250-300 million bushels at least which at \$1.60 per bushel represents from 400 to 500 million dollars. Farmers cannot live with this kind of decline in their returns.

• (11:10 p.m.)

Here is the situation, presented in the proverbial nutshell, so that the hon. member for Calgary South (Mr. Mahoney) and others who have spoken in an apologetic vein this evening on behalf of the government, must realize there is a real financial emergency in western Canada. The government has known about this for the past four or five months. As I say, I was shocked when the hon. member for Calgary South (Mr. Mahoney) tried to present the myth that there are wealthy farmers who take trips to the south and drive Cadillacs, and all the other nonsense we hear from hon. members in this house, in an effort to avoid facing the economic reality that was so clearly presented last May in the excellent brief of the Canadian Federation of Agriculture. This not only affects western Canada. Wheat is one of Canada's basic export commodities. If we are down \$500 million in

financial returns because of the disastrous decline in wheat exports, this will have a significant impact on the Canadian economy from one end of Canada to the other. It will have an effect on the manufacture of machinery, automobiles and all the other articles which largely one way or the other affect manufacturing industries in central Canada.

It was the present Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Sharp), when he was the minister of finance in 1964 when the boom was really under way in Canada, who made a statement to the effect that one of the main ingredients in the buoyancy of the Canadian economy was the strong position of prairie grain exports on the international market. If it was true that this was one of the reasons for the national buoyancy then, the converse is precisely true that the position of prairie grain exports now could have a disastrous effect on the total Canadian economy. We must get emergency cash into the hands of the farmers together with some long term program to deal with the disastrous effect of the lack of dollars. Farm income requires immediate emergency action on the part of the government of Canada. The western Canadian economy suffers from other disabilities in addition to the immediate crisis. The proposal of the hon. member for Winnipeg South (Mr. Richardson), the minister in charge of supplies, is to decentralize the Mint and establish it somewhere on the prairies. This is hardly adequate consideration.

Let me try to destroy the myth perpetuated by the hon. member for Calgary South as a spokesman for the west. His viewpoint is incomprehensible. Let us look at the figures in the green book brought down by the Minister of National Revenue (Mr. Côté) recently which covers the fiscal year 1966-67. This is from the records of the Department of National Revenue itself. Of the 89 cities listed in order of income tax paid, Winnipeg, the capital of the province of Manitoba, was 53 on the list. Brandon, my own city, was 79 on the list. Portage LaPrairie, in the heart of the rich plains, the great grain producing part of Manitoba, was 89 on the list of the 89 cities so far as income and taxes paid were concerned. Here is a real measure of the actual state of the economy. It does not indicate there are too many prairie folk taking holidays in the south or driving gold plated Cadillacs. I could give the picture for the province of Saskatchewan. Saskatoon is 38, Regina is 46, Prince Albert is 49 and Moose Jaw is 65. Oakville and Oshawa are near the top, and they had the benefit of an \$80 million injection into the automobile