

the Livestock Feed Assistance Act amendments before us today.

There have been two dominant principles in Canadian life in terms of federalism. One is sharing, and the other is regional advantage. Every area of the country accepts the concept of sharing with other parts of Canada. But when it comes to the concept of regional advantage, and when we take a look at the manner in which the country is constituted, it is obvious there are regional advantages in western Canada relating to the growing of feed grains and the livestock industry. To some degree that regional advantage has been eroded through legislation passed some time ago, namely, the Livestock Feed Assistance Act. The hon. member for Wetaskiwin (Mr. Schellenberger) made the point very well when he showed clearly that the concept of eroding regional advantage should be seriously examined and that possibly this is not the time nor the bill to do it with, even though he supported the amendments.

I have been concerned for some time about what has been happening. Through the national marketing boards, and legislation such as the Livestock Feed Assistance Act, to some degree we are balkanizing one region against another. Through the top loading of provincial programs on top of federal programs, a number of provinces have now made a decision to become self-sufficient in the production of hogs, turkeys or broilers. They are doing this to a great extent because of the advantages they now have from the National Marketing Board through national allocations for their provinces and the feed freight assistance they receive. So that comparative advantage is lost in those areas where the feed has been grown. Additionally it has repercussions for industries related to agriculture.

For years and years in western Canada we have been saying that we should process to a greater degree the agricultural products we produce. Also for a long time we have said that freight arrangements, which allow for the movement of unprocessed or semi-processed food stuffs from west to east, are much lower than when we buy back the finished product. Every western Canadian province has experienced the closing down of plants that have large killing floors and killing operations. This happened in Winnipeg with the closing of Swifts and the loss of 600 jobs. Because of comparative advantage and the fact that costs are the lowest in western Canada, we think that is where production should take place so that western Canada will have the benefit of the related jobs in the agricultural community.

At this period of time when we are facing severe drought in many parts of western Canada, we find it somewhat surprising that the federal government is concerned about this type of legislation. Yet we saw the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Whelan) coming forward just a few days ago with a program for \$7 million of assistance to alleviate the consequences of the drought. The \$7 million is to take care of the situations in the provinces of Saskatchewan and Manitoba. If one looks at the consequences and the large effect of drought, \$7 million does not seem to be a lot of money. I did not think I would ever

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stand in my place saying that \$7 million was not a lot of money, but the fact remains it is just another example to western Canadians that this government does not have any appreciation of their ability to produce foodstuffs and that they should have that comparative advantage; but when they run into difficulties they are not given the same consideration as other regions of the country.

I indicated that I would be brief, but lastly I should like to refer to the agricultural potential of the north. The government in its previous incarnation put a freeze on agricultural development in northern Canada. Previous to our government taking over last year, there were a number of representations from farmers in the Yukon and the Northwest Territories that agricultural land should be opened up. The government through its actions continually demonstrates to those of us who have a special interest in Canadian development north of the sixtieth parallel that it simply does not understand the desire of the residents of the Yukon or the Northwest Territories to develop the natural advantages in those areas. The government just does not seem to understand. In fact I have come to the conclusion that the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) developed his vision of the north back in 1954 when he paddled up the Teslin River and thought that area of Canada should remain pristine, pure and beautiful for those who wanted to escape the concrete jungles of the cities in the south. He developed the vision that that is the way the north should remain.

I cannot impress enough upon the government that it must change its view of the north. The government keeps on saying that it is not ready to do it because native people are not ready for the development. My experience is just the opposite. The native people wanted to take advantage and be partners in that kind of development. Some of their leaders did not want to because they saw a personal advantage as long as these things were strung out. But the average people living in hamlets have quite another story. They wanted to take advantage of their natural resources, whether it be in agriculture, mineral or oil development. There is no way one can run from those facts because that is how it is.

When we came into government we met with a number of farmers who were trying to struggle along with lease arrangements. It is almost a beg, borrow and steal operation; they are trying to keep going. These people are very independent. I know farmers by nature are independent, but these fellows kept on working under tremendous adversity, the greatest of which were the regulations of this government and its federal bureaucracy in those areas. They keep on struggling and they hope lightning will some day strike this government and they will be able to get land, which the rest of us take for granted. That is all they are asking, for the same opportunity. In fact 100 years ago immigrants were able to come to this country to homestead, and there are people in the two territories who do not even have those opportunities in 1980. It was our plan for the summer of 1980 to start opening land with a comprehensive program that would get the land into agricultural production.