

provinces respecting relief measures in such province or provinces; and to pay out of the consolidated revenue fund such sums as in his discretion may be required to meet the obligations created by such agreements; to provide for special requirements in the national parks and in the drought stricken areas of the province of Saskatchewan; to assist in defraying the cost of the sale and distribution of products of field, farm, sea, river and mine; to loan money to any province on such terms as may be agreed upon and to guarantee the repayment of moneys borrowed by such province and to assist any province in any way that may be deemed necessary or advisable to provide for the relief of distress and the support and maintenance of those requiring assistance, and to loan money to and guarantee the payment of money by any public corporation or undertaking.

Mr. CASGRAIN: Mr. Chairman, I should like to direct the attention of the minister to certain questions I put to him on April 28 when this resolution was before the house. I asked the minister if, under this legislation, farmers in the province of Quebec in need of seed grain would be able to obtain it by applying either to his department or to the Department of Agriculture. As I stated on that occasion, I have received a great number of requests from farmers in my constituency who are in need of seed grain. In the past certain privileges have been granted to the farmers of the west in connection with seed grain and I do not see any reason why the farmers of Quebec should not be granted similar privileges. At that time the minister stated that it was not within his knowledge that the provincial government, through its premier or minister of agriculture, had received requests from farmers who were in need of seed grain. The hon. member for Quebec East (Mr. Lapointe) then addressed himself to the minister as follows:

My information is that the Minister of Agriculture of Quebec last year made application to the Department of Agriculture for seed grain and was told that there was nothing for him.

Since this debate took place last week, in view of numerous requests I had received from my people, I addressed to the Minister of Agriculture a letter of which I have a copy in my hand and to which I have not yet received a reply from him. This letter is as follows:

Ottawa, April 29, 1932.

Hon. Robert Weir, P.C., M.P.,  
Minister of Agriculture,  
Ottawa, Ont.

Dear Sir:

I have received within the last few weeks, several requests of certain electors of my county, asking me to obtain seed grains for them, for seeding this spring.

They claim that on account of the bad financial situation in which they are at the

[Mr. Cahan.]

present time, they cannot afford to buy said seed grains. I know that in the past, certain special privileges have been granted to western farmers in such a way as to enable them to obtain such seed grains to help them in their seeding operations.

I shall be very much obliged to you if you could let me know what can be done for the farmers of my county to obtain said grains.

Yours very truly,

Pierre F. Casgrain.

Before this resolution passes, I think it is the duty of the minister to tell the house and the country at large what would be, under this legislation which we are called upon to adopt, the standing of the farming community, not only in Quebec but in the eastern provinces. Last year a bonus was given on wheat to help the western farmers, and people in our province requested the same treatment in connection with the dairy and, particularly, the butter industry. During the course of the provincial election last year some promises were made by members of the federal government who were helping the opposition in Quebec in their fight against the local government, but nothing material was enacted by this government to help the farmers of my province.

During the debate on the budget the hon. member for Dorchester delivered an admirable speech wherein he stated that it was time for the government to lay down a policy for assisting the farmers of eastern Canada as those of the west had been helped in years past when they were in need. Without saying too much about the people of Quebec being in dire necessity to-day, I think the farmers of my province—and I know I am safe in saying this as regards those in my county—are really suffering and in need of help from the federal government. What policy has the minister to enunciate along the lines I have just mentioned, in order to help the farmers of Quebec to buy seed grain for the present seeding season?

Mr. GORDON: The interrogation of the hon. member is very fair and proper. As is well known, advances for seed grain for farmers were made at the instance of a number of provinces and the federal government assisted with respect to funds to pay for the same. If there is in Quebec a condition that would seem to the local government to be beyond their capacity to take care of as a province, and a submission is made to the federal government, I have no doubt it will be taken under review and justly dealt with.

Mr. HEAPS: I wish to refer particularly to the question of lien notes which were submitted by the provincial governments and municipalities to persons who were recipients