

Alleged Failure to Aid Western Farmers

price system. The country is full of two price systems. The only exception in force applies to the wheat and grain farmers of western Canada. Having listened to the minister, and from my own knowledge of him, I am sure he has brought this matter to the attention of his colleagues in the cabinet. I ask him to keep on screaming as loud as he can because these people need assistance.

In conclusion I wish to emphasize that so far as the long term situation of grain farming or of dairying is concerned, the first thing we have to do is to go out and sell. It is simply not good enough for us to sell only 27 per cent as much as the United States. We have to be more militant and we have to go out and sell. But for the immediate future I ask the minister to bring forth something for these people. As I hope is well known in this house, personally I am against subsidies from A to Z right down the line. However, so long as we subsidize gold mines and the automobile industry in Canada, it is only right and just that the agricultural industry get its full share.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: It being six o'clock I do now leave the Chair until 8 p.m.

At six o'clock the house took recess.

AFTER RECESS

The house resumed at 8 p.m.

Mr. J. H. Horner (Crowfoot): Mr. Speaker, I am somewhat eager to take part in this debate, partly because it concerns a subject dear to my heart. The motion before the house reads:

That this house condemns the government for its failure to take steps to relieve the critical cash position of farmers in western Canada.

I was greatly disappointed in the speech made by the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Olson) this afternoon. The hon. gentleman spelled out a number of things which, he said, the government was presently doing, but he really did not tell us what, if anything, the government was proposing to do; he did not indicate that the government was even thinking of doing anything. He simply listed 12 things the government had done.

Mr. Olson: Things which were helpful.

Mr. Horner: He said the government had done 12 things which were helpful. I do not [Mr. Whicher.]

wish to misinterpret the minister and if he wishes to make any observations he is welcome to do so.

Mr. Olson: I appreciate that. I listed 12 things which were being done in accordance with government policy, programs which are helpful to farmers. But I did not say the government had initiated all of them in the past year.

Mr. Horner: Fine. The minister spelled out 12 programs which were being carried out but he did not say they were all initiated by this government. My point is that he did not state what the government intends to do, if anything, and this is what concerns western farmers, taking account of the cash position in which they find themselves today. He did mention a number of criteria into which solutions must fit. He said they must not aggravate the problem. Second, they must help those who needed help the most. Third, they must fit into a long term program for agriculture. He also told us that the basic difficulty was in marketing and that in the marketing of our products we must consider the effects of the international situation. He ended his summary by saying: "At this time the problem is in the ground." Well, that is a nice place to put it.

Mr. Olson: I did not say that.

Mr. Horner: We have heard of ostriches burying their heads in the sand but I never heard a minister of agriculture say the problem was in the ground.

Mr. Olson: You did not hear it today, either.

Mr. Horner: I should like to deal with the minister's speech and refer to some of the things which should be done by the government if it is really interested in helping farmers. In listing the 12 programs which are already in effect, the minister told us that under the cash advance legislation \$151 million had been made available. Mr. Speaker, this is money which has to be paid back by the farmers and it will be paid back by them as they deliver their grain. We should remember, though, that in this connection the minister also said that some \$90 million of this \$151 million would still be outstanding at the end of July, 1969; a little more than a month from now, and it will be carried over to next year. What could better substantiate the argument advanced by members of the N.D.P. that the government has failed to take