

*Supply—Agriculture*

He did not say implement.

—in a fully objective manner the possibility of "setting aside" a portion of the final wheat payment with a view to building up a fund which would be used in sharing in any loss which may occur, should there be a non-payment or default from a customer purchasing on a credit basis.

He was not suggesting that they allocate this fund to cover sales already made to China. He meant for future sales programs; and that is important.

There is one other matter on which I wish to take a stand. One political party in Canada is particularly opposed to wheat sales to China because its members feel such sales are wrong. That is one thing I admire about them. They stood up, even during the election campaign, and said they were against sales of wheat to China. But I remind them of the saying "It is better to be fed than red," and that other countries like Australia and New Zealand were also selling wheat, and that Britain and Europe continue to trade with China. Why should we not continue to trade with those countries which have not got enough to feed themselves?

I will repeat their own argument to those hon. members who oppose selling wheat to China: We will never get security and peace in any country where its people are hungry and starving. Any human being with his head firmly screwed on, will fight for his life if his children are hungry; and as we are the bread basket of a large part of the world we should continue to trade with those countries that need our foodstuffs. It was even said by the New Democratic party that food is better than bullets. All Canadians want peace and they believe that all people, no matter on what side of the iron curtain they live, should have the right to live in dignity with their families and friends free from hunger. As a western Conservative member I am proud that the government has seen fit to make those sales, and to trade with China as it does with other nations of the world.

**Mr. Olson:** Mr. Chairman, the debate so far has centred around the recent suggestion made by the Minister of Agriculture that there should be additional participation by farm grain handling organizations in the sale of wheat abroad. The importance of the item under discussion has been underlined by the fact that it was the party leaders in each case who led off in the debate. The Minister of Agriculture himself with the consent of the house made two speeches longer than the time limit allowed by the rules, and both his speeches were primarily concerned with wheat.

I do not intend to devote all my remarks to wheat or dealing with the minister's suggestions that farm organizations should shoulder more responsibility and more risk in future wheat sales, although there are one or two very important considerations which have not been given sufficient attention. One thing which disturbs me more than any other in respect to western Canadian farmers is the image that the minister has so successfully projected, that the farmers in western Canada are getting anything and everything they want from this government, and that they are actually getting more than their fair share of treasury funds and more than their fair share of consideration by the federal Department of Agriculture.

I have in my hand a clipping from the *Western Producer* of August 2, 1962, which has an article headed "Let's get this straight." It reads:

We are completely fed up with some of the glib assumptions made by the people who, before, during and after the election campaign undertook to size up the prairie vote situation by implying the Conservatives "bought" the farmers' vote with large and unwarranted government "handouts."

Readers may remember some of the "funny" men on election night remarking that you couldn't get in the door of the average prairie farmhouse without kicking aside the pile of government cheques. Another wisecrack—at least we think this is what was intended—was to the effect that every time a farmer opened his mail box at the post office, a few more "handout" cheques tumbled out.

In a moment I shall review some of the facts regarding prairie farm income during the period preceding the election, and also some of the facts with regard to the cost of operations during that same period. But before doing so there are one or two further quotations I would like to make from the same newspaper, so that we can see exactly what the prairie farmers got in the period preceding the election:

November, 1961: a prairie farm assistance payment of about \$60,000,000 to farmers who suffered varying degrees of crop failures—

This was not a handout. This was a payment from a scheme of long standing. As the article says:

Not a handout, but a very necessary government-underwritten insurance scheme of long standing.

December, 1961: a wheat board interim payment of ten cents per bushel on the previous year's wheat crop, totalling \$39,300,000, part of the actual proceeds of sales made in preceding months.

There is no handout here, but simply a normal payment of the farmer's own money. Then in January of 1962 there was an acreage payment of \$42 million at the rate of \$1 per acre on a limit of 200 acres. I agree that there was a payment out of the treasury in this respect. In February, 1962 it was announced that the initial price of wheat was to