

Someone yesterday expressed some regret that the House has spent so much time for so many years before dealing with the feed grain problem.

I think I should also deal with this as with other points that have been mentioned during the discussion on these estimates.

We know perfectly well that my constituency, like many others, includes a large number of producers who have encountered difficulties because of this policy on feed grains for quite a long time. This is very disturbing for them, especially when competition at the national level is mentioned.

In my opinion, we have no right to neglect to bring this matter once more to the attention of the minister who is now present in the House, not in order to blame him, because, on the contrary, as the new minister from the east—and I am glad that he is new—I think he will naturally show more understanding in respect of the problems raised by eastern producers.

The minister is aware of the position taken by the Quebec delegation last week, but I think that the delegation has made that gesture in order to prove how important it is to remedy the unfair situation of eastern producers, not only of Quebec producers. There is a great number of producers who are directly affected by the unfair feed grain policy, and they think that the time has come to settle the matter.

As a member of Parliament, I was very happy to see that the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) had included in the speech from the throne amendments designed to settle that problem, and to learn that the minister had stated that he hoped the matter would be settled before the month of June.

All the members also must realize how important this problem is and join forces in making the members of other areas understand it, because for quite natural reasons, they might hesitate to redress that injustice. It is not a matter of depriving anyone of his rights, but merely of viewing generally the importance of the economy at the national level as far as those measures are concerned, and I think that eastern producers are only eager to work to meet a fair competition.

I hope that the minister will make every effort with regard to that policy in order to ensure a fair treatment in the interests of national unity.

I was also very pleased to find that the minister was especially concerned with the family farm. He added that the government had passed beneficial measures in the past few years—such as the Farm Products Marketing Agencies Act—which are, in his opinion, a further step forward stability. Speaking of stability, one may say that farmers have never enjoyed it as other groups of citizens have. I think that the minister is quite right in raising the question of stability, because such stability would enable farmers to live in a world in which he would feel secure about his future, which would be likely to encourage young farmers.

People often wonder in my riding as in others whether the young are not losing interest in the farm. This can be explained by the poverty that the young man has

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experienced at home, the instability that has affected him and because of competition that is often unfair.

• (1710)

It is imperative that the government hasten to set up more equitable programs. Bill C-176 deals with marketing and is aimed at ensuring more adequate prices. It deals also with farm credit, but should we not still consider the cost of interests when dealing with that subject?

If we really want to instill in the young a taste for farming, we must offer him benefits not available to him at the present time. The interest required on farm loans is a discouraging feature for the young farmer, and he will not accept to borrow huge sums of money once he has learned of the difficulties his parents have experienced.

In my opinion, it would be advisable for the minister to seriously consider preparing for the benefit of the young farmers a loan policy involving very special interest rates. This would encourage the young man to eventually take his father's place and show that the government is really willing to open a door and help those young people find stability in farming.

We know very well that these young farmers also need management classes. In my constituency, as I was told recently, people deeply regret that the Department of Manpower and Immigration will not work harder at providing help for the young farmers, and I mean not necessarily those people who have already 40 or 45 years of farming experience, but rather the young people who need more training in management, considering all the changes to which farming is being subjected today. That need has become vital for the reasons I have mentioned and I believe that the young farmers would benefit enormously from such help, as would the Canadian economy as a whole. The farmers having more qualifications in management, farming would be more lively and more challenging.

These are the suggestions I had to make, taking into account the needs of agriculture at the national level, and not only within the limits of my constituency.

I should also like to take this opportunity, as others have done, to deal with two major problems. Feed grains have been discussed and apparently the minister is to settle that problem. I hope we shall be informed of a solution by June. The Canadian Dairy Federation, as the hon. member for Bellechasse (Mr. Lambert) said a short while ago, has submitted a brief fully explaining the reasons for their requests to the Canadian Dairy Commission and to the government for supplementary subsidies of some 60 cents, because of constantly increasing production costs.

Clearly, and particularly because of the experiences of 1972 and of unfavourable temperatures, producers' needs are greater than ever. Considering the constant increase in production costs, it is also easy to understand that the Canadian Dairy Federation's request is fully justified.

We expect to hear good news from the minister early in April and in the interest of an improvement in the situation of those producers we hope he will give a positive response to the arguments and requests brought forward