

*Prairie Grain Advance Payments Act*

Year's recess as I toured the constituency of Yorkton-Melville. I also made a speaking tour throughout southern and western Manitoba and Saskatchewan. The farming people in western Canada are becoming very concerned about conditions as they are. They are asking a lot of basic questions, such as why the farmer is getting rougher and rougher treatment all the time. Why is it becoming increasingly difficult for him to meet his needs? Why is the farmer the only person today who, when he goes into a store, must ask how much a certain commodity is and must accept it at that price? Yet, when he sells his produce he must ask how much he will be given for it.

The farmer is one of the few people left today who finds himself suffering within the so-called free enterprise market. This is the position the farmer is strapped in; everything works against him. The whole system seems to be working against him. He is becoming increasingly frustrated and restless. This is the reason, I believe, that he is starting to ask a lot of very basic questions. This mood can be found everywhere. One finds farmers asking questions, talking about organizing, seriously protesting and demanding that they get more recognition. They are beginning to demand a reduction in the prices paid for the commodities which they must purchase before they can produce a bushel of wheat. Farmers are demanding more markets. They say the government asks them to produce grain, but when they do the same people in the government do not find markets for their grain.

We know that a great deal of food in the form of grain is going to waste. The Canadian farmers have the capacity to produce grain, but it is not sold. This is the reason they are asking a lot of basic questions. I think we should look at the real problem. It is not only the farmer of western Canada who is concerned. The agricultural industry, I think, is still one of the most important industries for Canada as a whole. It is a vicious circle. If the farmer and the agricultural industry are having a bad time, then the business community right across the country is having a bad time. This has an adverse effect upon the entire economy and they there are repercussions right through the entire nation. This is the reason we must find some new and radical alternatives in the agricultural field, rather than just attempt to solve one or two problems by one or two minor pieces of legislation.

[Mr. Nystrom.]

We cannot ignore the problem. We cannot hope to solve it by just approaching it here and there, then locking the real problem in the closet and forgetting about it. It will not go away. We must take the problem by the horns and explore some new avenues. Many people have grain in their bins which they cannot sell. Some of them are on a one bushel quota, others are on a two bushel quota and perhaps a few are on a three bushel quota. But these people have tough and damp grain which they are unable to dry because they cannot afford to do so. Many of these people are in debt up to their ears because of the price of farm machinery and land. I know people who are going to the bank and the credit union begging for money and for extensions on their loans. This is how drastic things are becoming. Many of them may be forced out of business. This is the reason we must explore some radical alternatives and consider giving grants rather than loans to some of these people who are in really serious circumstances.

We can look around us. We can look, for instance, at the movement of grain. I say that we should start campaigning for a more vigorous marketing policy. I have before me some statistics from the Board of Grain Commissioners concerning shipments from country grain elevators. For the month of December, 1967 there were some 28,696 carloads of grain shipped from grain elevators. During the same period in 1968 there were 21,311 carloads of grain shipped from grain elevators. This is a decrease of about 7,300 in a year when we need increased rather than decreased shipments. All of us remember quite well the emergency debate in this house last week concerning the tie-up in the shipments of grain from the port of Vancouver. We can't afford this type of situation when it so seriously affects the people on the farms. We must speed up these things and restore some of the faith people have in all of us in this chamber, not only the farmers in western Canada but many people across this country.

Many people are losing faith in this institution. They want us to be more relevant and produce results right here and now. We see that in January, for example, of 1967 there were some 14,885 carloads of grain shipped. In the same two week period of January last year, 1968, there were 5,835 carloads of grain shipped. During the first two weeks of January this year the figure was down to some 4,674. We see a steady decrease in the number of carloads of grain that are being shipped. I