

*Supply—Agriculture*

The price of grain has not increased. Last year it might have gone up 10 cents a bushel due to better grades but since 1953 it has shown no substantial increase and in fact it has been continually declining. Western farmers are caught in the grip of a vicious cost price squeeze. Western farmers are told that they do not need to buy new machinery. How can we repair our old machinery in view of increasing costs and dwindling returns? I have not many examples of increased prices of repairs to machinery but I might state that a Massey-Harris disc spool which cost \$2.25 in 1953 cost \$4.35 in 1958. That is what the western farmer is up against today. The price of everything we require is increasing due to freight rates and other things but our products have not increased in price.

I would define a family farmer as a man with a small section of land. Let me give an illustration concerning a farm family on one section of land with 500 acres under cultivation. The farmer is allowed to sell on a 6 bushel quota and would therefore sell 3,000 bushels. For this he would receive a price of perhaps \$1.20 per bushel, or \$3,600. As against this he must make the following expenditures in round figures: taxes, \$600; fuel, \$500; casual help, \$200; seed and fertilizer, \$500; the payment on his farm, \$1,200; and estimated repairs on machinery, \$600, giving a total of \$3,400. If \$3,400 is subtracted from \$3,600 it is evident that the farmer has only \$200 left. That represents his profit on his grain farming for the year. Although it is necessary for a farmer today to raise this grain and to engage in mixed farming, I feel it is unfair that he should be expected to produce this grain with so little return on his operation. In giving the illustration above I did not take into consideration the many small items on which a grain farmer would be required to spend money. The only way a farmer can exist in the west is to go into mixed farming but he should get a greater return on producing grain. These are problems for which adequate solutions must be found.

We must also protect the farm family from contract farming. This is gaining popularity in the pig industry and others. In my constituency last year I would say between 700 and 800 turkeys were raised in the entire area. When I left to come to Ottawa there were four farmers who had 8,000 turkeys. That is just an example of what is taking place. It is the responsibility of this government to find solutions to these difficulties.

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In both the east and west I know there are farmers who are becoming too old to remain engaged in active farming and who would like to turn over their farms to younger people. There are many young men coming along who are eager to engage in farming but who have not sufficient capital to acquire a farm. I urge this government to consider the possibility of introducing legislation under which extended credit and long term loans would be made to young farmers to assist them in becoming established in farming. I hope this government will continue the acreage payment the same as last year. It was of some assistance but it was not large enough last year.

It is a sad situation in western Canada today to observe that on a loaf of bread costing 20 cents or 22 cents, that western farmer receives only 3.2 cents. In Alberta a year ago we had bread being shipped by train. One day one of the bakers decided to start something new and so he sent the bread on a truck and put it on the road. Another baker and then another decided to follow suit and so the trend developed. Not being satisfied with that they decided to put large trucks on the road and they hired additional men to drive the trucks. At the first of this year they decided they could not make enough money doing that so the price of bread was increased by 2 cents a loaf in Alberta. The western farmer received no benefit from this increase. I request that the government conduct an inquiry into bakery combines in Canada with a view to exploring their operations and having the western farmer receive a fair return on his grain growing operation to assist him to overcome the cost price squeeze in which he is caught, in other words a two price system.

**Mr. Howard:** Mr. Chairman, after listening to the hon. member who just resumed his seat and who classified himself as a mixed up farmer, I cannot resist commenting that if one had a fairly weak stomach one might have had some difficulty in keeping the contents down during the course of his remarks. I do not intend to make any comment on the references made by the hon. member to my good friend the hon. member for Assiniboia. I will let him answer the vilifying remarks and character assassination in which the hon. member engaged in the last few moments. I feel that the personal integrity of the member for Assiniboia has been slandered.

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh.

**Mr. Howard:** Hon. gentlemen opposite treat that as a joke. I expect that they look upon most other serious matters as a joke, too, and especially problems concerning farmers.