

The Budget—Mr. McBride

around the subject of markets. Good farm incomes mean better markets for machinery, fertilizer and other inputs. When there are good markets for farm producers, there is more business for milk processors, meat packers, elevator operators, and retailers. The welfare of agribusiness is inextricably tied with that of the farmers.

● (3:30 p.m.)

The difficulties in which agriculture finds itself, as seen from the point of view of governments, tend to arise largely as a result of low basic incomes. It would seem to me that from the viewpoint of the government the cost to the treasury of price supports and similar programs becomes part of the "farm problem". We come to the root of the matter when we recognize that among ministers of the cabinet conflicting responsibilities arise in their different areas of authority. Cabinets in countries such as ours tend to divide on the question of food prices. Ministers with special responsibility for agriculture and related fields want higher prices so as to raise farm incomes, while consumer-oriented ministers want prices to be as low as possible so as to counteract the tendency to inflation. Governments also find that unsatisfactory social conditions arising out of low farm incomes necessitate manpower, urban housing and adjustment programs since they contribute to urban pressure and increase the influx to already crowded cities of young people who, if the situation were more favourable, would remain in the agriculture industry. Governments have also tended to regard agriculture as a special subject. Its earnings abroad could be an important source of vital foreign exchange, though exports from year to year were subject to violent fluctuation.

The main difficulties of agriculture, as seen by the agricultural task force, also revolve around the fact of low farm incomes, though one should bear in mind that this is the symptom of a basic inequality in the allocation of resources as between agriculture and the other sectors, in labour mobility, in education, in alternate employment, in the international competitiveness of Canadian products and, finally, in the adequacy of government agricultural programs.

Mr. MacInnis: A point of order, Mr. Speaker. I do not expect my point of order will get anywhere but I would draw attention to the fact that the hon. member is reading every word of a prepared speech.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member has called the attention of the Chair to the fact that the hon. member who had the floor is referring to notes. He knows that a number of hon. members making formal presentations to the House do refer to notes. There was, at one time, an established rule, I believe, that members ought not to read their speeches but it seems that increasingly in recent years we have reached a position where hon. members, or a number of them, feel they have a better chance of making a complete presentation to the House if they refer to copious notes. This practice is followed by a number of hon. members on both sides of the House.

[Mr. McBride.]

The hon. member for Cape Breton-East Richmond has raised a valid point of order. The hon. member who has the floor has noted it, and the Chair has noted it also.

Mr. MacInnis: I acknowledge Your Honour's statement about the reading of speeches. I do not always call attention to the fact that hon. members are reading their speeches. In this case, it is my way of criticizing the critic.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I do not think there is any point in pursuing the matter, but it seems to me that in fairness, if one hon. member is referring to notes and another hon. member calls attention to that, it should be done in the case of all hon. members, and to the personal knowledge of the Chair speeches have been made from notes on numerous occasions during this particular debate. However, I will not take upon myself the initiative of calling the hon. member to order. While it is in order to use notes, I suggest it is better, though, that presentations be made to the House by way of unwritten speeches.

Mr. McBride: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I would only say that the phrase is "refer to notes" in a general way. On the other hand, I might add that most of us who sit in the House believe many speeches are improved if they demonstrate a little research and people have brought some notes with them. Another thing that bothers me is the limited time available to us. If a speaker does not bring in any notes, and does not deal with his subject in an orderly way, he can easily find himself cut off before he has really put over what he wanted to say.

Mr. MacInnis: I rise on a point of order, Mr. Speaker, in connection with the lecture the hon. member is now trying to give the House. If he paid a little more attention to his own constituency and a little less to the heavy water industry he would perhaps know what is going on.

Mr. Speaker: That is not a point of order. I now have to call the hon. member for Cape Breton-East Richmond to order. The hon. member for Lanark-Renfrew-Carleton has the floor.

Mr. McBride: The point I was coming to before I was interrupted is that farm people all over the world tend to be among the lowest paid segments of society.

Mr. MacInnis: You are still reading.

Mr. McBride: The result is, of course, that the power for action, the political power, the power as consumers, available to the farm segments is lower than that of other segments. This is particularly true in Canada where the farm community has been so largely made up of people imbued with what I might call the pioneer spirit, the type of person who prefers to go it alone. The result is that the farm population in Canada has never formed itself into a cohesive unit which could make its wishes well felt in government and administrative circles. This is probably linked with the fact that the farm community is made up of thousands of individuals whose products are sold to a relatively few purchasers. In consequence,