

*Agricultural Policies*

the government is doing, and he simply cannot understand why the opposition does not appreciate everything the government is doing. He said the agricultural industry is doing quite fine. He trotted out a number of income figures.

True enough, he quoted a number of figures regarding rapeseed income, flax income, potato income and several other items on which in 1969 there was some increase. But regardless of these selective statistics which the minister used, he cannot escape the fact that the farmers' cash income in 1969, as shown by DBS, dropped by \$167 million for Canada as a whole. For my own province of Saskatchewan it dropped by more than that amount, by \$177 million. In Alberta it dropped by \$77 million, and in Manitoba by \$12 million. That of course means that there were other areas in Canada where there was some increase in the cash income. Nevertheless, I think it can be illustrated that across Canada as a whole there is in fact a very serious situation facing the agricultural industry, and this has profound implications for Canada.

Of course, the Minister without Portfolio (Mr. Lang) tried to show the House that the government is moving on every front in dealing with the problems that face agriculture in rural Canada. He went on to say that a new quota system was recommended by a special committee. But of course he failed to make any mention of the fact that these recommendations were totally ignored when the government came forward with its program for the coming crop year. I could give other examples to illustrate the inconsistency of the Minister without Portfolio.

There is one particular matter that I drew to the attention of the House this morning which I think illustrates some of the approach and attitude of the government on many matters affecting agriculture. When I asked the minister if any consideration was going to be given to the elevator agents who will have to do a great deal of extra work in dealing with the administrative aspects of Operation Lift as it was introduced by the government, the minister informed me that they had obtained an agreement with the elevator companies to look after this particular matter. He gave no indication, in answer to my question on the matter, that there had been any consultation with the employees of the elevator companies or indeed the employees' organizations. According to my information, there is no question that the elevator companies do look

[Mr. Burton.]

after the permit books. With respect to the other forms, I am not familiar with the complete picture. However, I understand that there is a good deal of confusion and there is certainly a grey area which requires further examination.

I think the elevator companies and their employees are not happy with this aspect of the program. The fact is that the farmer does go to his elevator agent for advice. This is a time-consuming activity. The question might be asked: Why not use the PFAA man? The PFAA personnel have been designated as the people to administer this program. Why are they not the ones to act as liaison? Why is it that the municipal secretariat throughout western Canada who were asked if they would look after the job refused to do so? Finally, they secured some sort of an O.K. from the elevator companies and agreed to their employees looking after some aspects of this program. This is a further example of the administrative bumbling which has been a feature of just about every aspect of the government's agricultural programs over the past two years that I have been in the House.

I think it is timely that we have a debate on agriculture today in view of the fact that the task force on agriculture has at last produced its report or, I should say, at last the government has made the report public. There are many recommendations in this report which require a great deal of study. Time does not permit me today to go into all these matters. However, I would like to know why there is apparently a considerable degree of hesitation involved in its recommendations to deal with agriculture as an industry rather than from the viewpoint of the people who are making their livelihood in it, from the viewpoint of the communities and from the viewpoint of Canadian society as a whole.

I think there is still some redirection of emphasis required if we are going to find adequate solutions to what are admittedly difficult problems. In addition, as has been noted, there is legislation before the House at the present time on this matter. The Canada Grains Act is designed as a vehicle to enable the introduction of a protein grading system at some time. The government had this item on its list of legislation a year ago and it was not introduced. This year it was again on the list of legislation to be introduced but the government held off for months and months before introducing it. Apparently they had to carry on consultations with the Canada