

The Address—Mr. N. Horner

Some hon. Members: Explain.

Mr. Horner (Battleford-Kindersley): Within the constituency are some of the finest ranches and some of the finest herds of breeding cattle in the world. Being so large, my constituency extends northward into the parkland and south into some of the best wheat growing land in western Canada. I might add that it lies in the flyway of the Canada goose. It is also on the migration route of many other species of geese and ducks. This attracts hundreds of people from all over the United States and Canada to visit the area during the fall. There are in Battleford-Kindersley a great many active and lively communities served by 12 weekly newspapers which do much to hold these communities together.

In my speech this evening I intend to deal mainly with agriculture, coming, as I do, from an agricultural constituency. I had a very interesting experience early in November. I attended a meeting in Kindersley at which about 150 mayors, reeves and other responsible leaders were present: they had come from within a radius of about 60 miles. For two days the problems facing rural Saskatchewan were examined and discussed. We followed a procedure whereby we listed problems in order of priority. The first, we agreed, was the depopulation of the rural areas. This, of course, is closely related to agricultural policies. We felt that the main cause of this depopulation was the inability of young men and women to get started in farming.

During my time in this House I hope to devote myself strenuously to policies which will help not only to maintain the population of rural Saskatchewan but to increase it. This is vital to the social life of the region and to the communities concerned. I do not intend to go into details now, but I have in mind amendments to the farm credit legislation, amendments long overdue, which would enable young men and women to get started. I would point out, Mr. Speaker, that in the city one can buy a \$30,000 house by making a down payment of \$500. One would need a lot more cash than that before the Farm Credit Corporation would look seriously at an application to acquire a half section of land.

Before I address myself more specifically to the subject of agriculture I wish to bring before the House a very serious social issue. On Monday we heard an hour and a half of whimpering about how the west was lost. I can tell the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) and a number of his hon. friends who are absent from the chamber tonight that I was asked many times to state my position on the issue I am about to mention. In fact, it was raised more frequently than any other issue which was discussed during the campaign. Every day in hospitals across the country human beings are being slaughtered as a result of the legislation which was passed in 1969, a bad piece of legislation, poorly drafted, allowing therapeutic abortion to be carried out in hospitals. In the first month after its passage, September, 1969, there were 105 such abortions. In December, 1971, there were 3,090. How many will there be this month? Heaven only knows. In 1971 there were 30,944 therapeutic abortions.

Before long this House is expected to discuss the question of the death penalty, something which would affect relatively few people. What about the innocent human

[Mr. Horner (Battleford-Kindersley).]

beings who are being murdered every day—and “murdered” is the term used by a great many very fine people who have approached me on the subject. I have committed myself to trying to do something about this problem in the hope that an amendment can be made to the legislation. I know members of all parties are most concerned about this question and I hope we will reconsider the legislation in the very near future.

• (2020)

I should now like to turn to some agricultural problems I feel must be dealt with immediately. In the last few years we have not appeared to be a very credible supplier of grain. Sure, we can sell it now because there is a shortage in the world and our customers will take it in spite of the inconvenience to and the harassment of them. This spring the United States will be increasing its wheat acreage and we will probably increase ours. We could very quickly be back in a similar situation to that which existed in 1969-70. We were not prepared for it then, but let us prepare for it this time.

The “build for a billion” minister is not in the House at the moment, but I advised him this morning I would be speaking on matters pertaining to the Wheat Board and would be critical of his position. Let me list four things that must be done immediately, some of which will take four or five years to complete. We can carry on no longer with a band-aid approach to agricultural problems, with the minister flying out in an attempt to give the farmers a lift.

We have no shipping facilities capable of handling large ships. In five or ten years' time wheat might be handled this way, with a saving of perhaps 10 or 20 cents a bushel, and the difference could well mean a sale. I can foresee the day when we will be loading our wheat through United States ports such as Seattle because we cannot handle large ships and the customers will want loading done that way. We have to get at this problem right away because it cannot be solved in a month.

We do not have sufficient storage from which to fill the ships now coming into port on the west coast, let alone the larger ships to which I have referred. We do not have enough storage to ensure that a proper supply of wheat is available of various qualities and grades for export. We cannot guarantee delivery on a regular basis because we cannot assure customers that there will not be hold-ups due to strikes. Of course, the previous government had a policy regarding grain strikes: they allowed them to continue for 50 days in the east and 21 days in the west, provided it was just before an election.

If we are to be a reliable supplier of grain we must realize that one of the first things our customers will ask is whether we can deliver when they want delivery. They do not want to store two years' supply of wheat in their countries: they want to buy wheat from somebody who can fill the ships and get the grain to them quickly; they cannot afford to wait days, weeks and months. Our acreage seeded to rape and barley fluctuates drastically. Our customers are aware of this and do not consider us a very credible supplier of grain when we do not seem to know how much we are going to seed from one year to the next.