

*Prairie Grain Advance Payments Act*

with only 22 million people and the potential of producing all the agricultural produce we want, should import agricultural produce.

I say again that the task of this government ought to be the search for markets. The markets are there, if we want them. If our transportation and handling systems are inadequate, then for gosh sakes let us change them. I am sure that the people of Canada will not mind any money we vote to rectify that situation.

We have made suggestions from time to time which the government has ignored. We have suggested the building of all-weather terminals in positions which will enable ships to come to them in winter and summer and take away our produce. The government has ignored these ideas. We ought to build terminals in Europe and elsewhere near our markets so that we have ready access to any customer. Also, no customer ought to be too small. The minister ought to learn from some of the business people operating in that part of the country he represents. Let him look at the subsidiary of a large company, the Canadian subsidiary of Imperial Oil. That company handles millions and millions of dollars' worth of products. The people on the Prairies know that Imperial Oil is concerned about small markets as much as big markets. I think all oil companies are. I have mentioned Imperial Oil because I know about it. Practically every oil company on the Prairies will send a service truck to a farm at almost any time to deliver any number of gallons of gas or oil that the farmer wants. The oil companies are hungry for business.

That reminds me of what happened when we had surpluses prior to 1957. The attitude of the then Minister of Trade and Commerce, Mr. Howe, was this: If customers want our produce, let them come and get it. Anybody with any experience in business knows that the customer will not come unless you entice him or invite him to come and see your product. We produce the best agricultural products in the world right here in Canada, and the minister says that we cannot sell them. I would hate to let some American salesmen in here and get hold of our products. They sell an inferior product but they get markets for their grain. American salesmen have gone into the world markets with an inferior product and taken away our customers from under our noses. This is ridiculous.

Perhaps I am finding too much fault with the minister. Presumably he is an intelligent man. He has been a member of this House for some time and dealing with our wheat problems. He knows the problems that are encountered in the selling of wheat. What excuses has he made? At one time he blamed the government's failure on the cold weather which froze the trains and did not permit the grain to be put into the correct positions. The next time he said it was a strike and once more it was impossible to get the grain into position. Similar problems have been encountered by previous governments.

Surely this government can learn its lessons. If we ought to be searching for markets, I wish the minister would say why he is not doing so. Why is he not putting his efforts forward in that direction? Surely there must be some merit in our suggestions. As I said before, if the

[Mr. McIntosh.]

minister supports the Prime Minister's policy of reducing the number of farmers, he is going about it in the right way. I do not know what the advantage of that action will be, Mr. Speaker: I fail to understand it.

May I refer for a few moments to the minister's remarks on introducing this bill. He said, as reported at page 5491 of *Hansard*:

The bill before the House to amend the Prairie Grain Advance Payments Act is a further step in attempting to rationalize and improve the situation of the grains industry of this country.

I cannot understand how he could make a statement like that. He went on to say:

Over a period of recent months, we did a significant number of things to allow the farmer to put his remarkable efficiency to better use by improving the system which faced him and over which he had no control.

He admitted that farmers have no control over the way grain is handled at present, that it is the responsibility of the government to sell the grain and that it is not living up to that responsibility. He went on to say:

Perhaps the most notable thing done which is related to this bill was the alteration in the quota system announced for next year by the Wheat Board, which was in part also in effect this year.

I remember what he said when introducing the Lift program legislation. What that program was to do for the western farmer! What it was to do with regard to the enormous surpluses we had on hand! I am sure the minister now realizes that that program backfired. Certainly, its purpose was to reduce the production of grain and it reduced that production. But why was that done in an expanding market? Has anybody ever heard such a thing? That is hard to understand. He went on to say:

As a result of that change in the quota system, the ancient special bias toward wheat compared with other grains has been removed in order that the farmers' decisions about which grains to grow might be more directly related to market conditions—

What market conditions was he referring to? The market conditions that he has created within Canada? Or was he talking about worldwide market conditions? If he was talking about worldwide market conditions, I would ask him to take another look at them. Either he is getting wrong advice from his advisers, reading the wrong books or acting in the wrong manner.

● (5:20 p.m.)

I ask the minister who represents western Canada to change his philosophy with regard to marketing grain to one which will be beneficial to those engaged in agriculture. Do not put these people off the farms. They are going to be necessary. One cannot pick up a paper today that does not deplore the fact that there are many starving people in this world. I don't know how we should get the food to where there is a problem, but we have the food and are capable of producing much more. This is one matter in which the minister should be interested.

Contrary to the belief of most people in Canada, there are very few subsidies paid to the agricultural industry in this country. This industry has less protection here than it has in any other country. The European Common