

Farm Credit Act

that there has been a turn-around in the agricultural industry and conditions are not nearly as bad as they were three or four years ago. When I hear my western friends—and I have many on the other side—criticizing the government about lack of grain sales, I simply ask: When did they sell more grain than was sold last year by the Minister of Justice (Mr. Lang) who is responsible for the Wheat Board?

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Whicher: The answer is, never in the history of Canada.

Mr. Nowlan: And never at lower prices.

Mr. Whicher: My hon. friend from Annapolis Valley shows his ignorance. As a lawyer he is a professional, but as a farmer he is an amateur. He suggests the wheat was sold at low prices. Would we have sold more if we had sold grain at prices other than world prices? Surely my hon. friend from Annapolis Valley is not suggesting that we should sell grain at prices lower than world prices? He is not suggesting that we should sell grain at prices higher than world prices; of course not. We must meet the conditions of the market and that is exactly what the minister from Saskatoon-Humboldt did. Actually, he was given the salesman of the year award for his sales.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Nowlan: By whom?

Mr. Whicher: This award was not given by the people of Canada, but by western farmers, Mr. Speaker.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Whicher: I remember criticizing the Minister of Agriculture during the past two years with respect to the government's dairy policy. I criticized the government over the sale of cattle because the price was not as high as it should be. I criticized the government because tobacco sales were not as they should be. Yet I say to you tonight, Mr. Speaker, that the government has done an excellent job. The price of cattle is an example of that; it is almost at its highest level in the history of Canada. If we are to condemn the government for certain things it has done, let us at the same time give credit where credit is due; and it is due in connection with this bill.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Whicher: It has done a good job in the dairy industry, too. I remember, when first starting in the dairy business in 1947, that the price of fluid milk in Ontario was \$3.75 per hundredweight. What is the price today? I will not ask the hon. member for Annapolis Valley, because he would not know the answer. The price has doubled.

Mr. Nowlan: Oh!

Mr. Whicher: It has doubled in price.

Mr. Nowlan: Oh!

[Mr. Whicher.]

Mr. Whicher: Yes, it has doubled in price, Mr. Speaker. And the legal fees of my hon. friend for Annapolis Valley have gone up tenfold in that time.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Whicher: I criticized the government in the last year or so because the price of hogs was in my opinion deplorable. I was one of those who criticized the Minister of Agriculture over this. I can now say to him that I apologize to some extent because he is the man responsible for the present that the government has given to the farmers and hog producers of Canada; he is responsible for the \$25 million subsidy to the hog producers, which they need and deserve.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Whicher: To my hon. friends from the west who are conversant with the grain industry—I see some in this chamber—I simply put this question: When was there a two-price system for grain in this country before this government introduced such a system?

An hon. Member: Never.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Whicher: Mr. Speaker, that system was introduced by this government. It was introduced under our Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau), the Prime Minister whom the opposition condemns. Yet you fellows never had it so good.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Nowlan: It is not a two-price system; it is a two-sided coin.

Mr. Whicher: Mr. Speaker, we all agree that much could be done to improve agriculture. We agree, for example, that hog prices are not as high as they should be, that dairy prices are not as high as they should be and that grain prices are not as high as they should be. Last fall, several months ago, we introduced a bill into this House that had taken between 18 months and two years to prepare. It was Bill C-176. The farmers of Canada asked for that bill.

An hon. Member: The farmers of Ontario.

Mr. Whicher: it was introduced in order to bring about effective national marketing in the whole of Canada. It was to give the farmers of Canada an opportunity to sell their products, to run their show, to curtail production if necessary, and so on. After all, General Motors does not continue producing thousands of cars after it has sold a certain number. Massey-Ferguson does not attempt to supply thousands of tractors after the market is saturated.

Mr. Nowlan: How many agencies are there, Ross?

Mr. Whicher: The point is that under Bill C-176, the bill bringing in a national marketing plan, this government offered the farmers of Canada an opportunity to run their own show, that is, to produce them, manufacture them