

Agreements Respecting Marginal Lands

The government should be undertaking programs to get rid of our wheat, barley and butter.

Mr. Hamilton (Qu'Appelle): Would the hon. member permit a question. I would like to ask the hon. member where he was when the Vancouver grain handlers strike was on for three weeks at which time we could have shipped another 10 million bushels of wheat?

Mr. Argue: According to the Canadian wheat board we did not lose any sales. I have the floor, Mr. Chairman. It is this government that was and is responsible. This is a work for the general advantage of Canada. This is the minister who sat with hands folded and did nothing. The minister and the government allowed the strike to go on without exerting authority.

Mr. Hamilton (Qu'Appelle): Answer my question. Where were you?

Mr. Pickersgill: Where were you?

Mr. Hamilton (Qu'Appelle): Was the hon. gentleman in the bulrushes?

Mr. Argue: The minister may reply later if he wishes. The hon. gentleman has a great facility for distracting attention and setting up a kind of sideshow.

Mr. Pickersgill: The minister is one.

Mr. Argue: The government has failed to deal with agricultural policies relating to support prices and markets for surplus commodities and in view of its abysmal failure in order to distract attention it has set up this sideshow which is nice entertainment. We are appreciative of it but it is only a sideshow in relation to the great problems facing the agricultural communities.

Mr. Hamilton (Qu'Appelle): Every farmer wants to know where the hon. gentleman was.

Mr. Argue: The minister said he was going to raise his sights with respect to getting markets for Canadian wheat. When he did so he got his sights up to a mark 20 million bushels lower than the accomplishment of the former minister of trade and commerce. This inability of the Minister of Agriculture to dispose of the surplus agricultural commodities in the world today condemns the government's over-all agricultural policy.

The third proposal I suggest in this period of depressed markets is farm storage of surplus farm commodities, particularly grain. I suggest that in conjunction with such a policy there should be guaranteed to the grain producers of western Canada an annual quota of eight bushels per specified acre. If the government fails to obtain markets adequate for producers to fulfil this quota then

[Mr. Argue.]

they should be paid for grain held on the farm. With respect to the difference between the amount sold and that held on the farm they should be paid farm storage as well. That, Mr. Chairman, would be a great step forward in the development of an over-all agricultural policy.

I would suggest that in this resolution providing for the improvement of agriculture generally there should be a provision for national marketing boards to provide, at the producer's request, stability in the assembling, processing and marketing of agricultural products. The government should cease and desist from the policy of tearing down the stabilized marketing system for grain that has been built up by so many years of sacrifice and at such great cost in energy on the part of the people who were supporting it.

The government is wrong and in error in its policy of allowing feed mills of this country literally to steal grain from producers who are in distressed circumstances at prices lower than the Canadian wheat board—

The Deputy Chairman: Order. The Chair has been quite lenient with the hon. member. He has been wandering all over the general agricultural field, and I would ask the hon. member to stick more to the resolution than he has been doing.

Mr. Argue: Mr. Chairman, the minister ranged very widely in his discussion. I think you will have to agree that he discussed the whole ambit of the government's agricultural policy. He did not stick to this one resolution. He talked about agricultural credit, he talked about the government's proposed support program, and so on. I am not going to deal at length with other things that I think should be in this program or to deal at length with comments on those other policies. I suggest that since the minister, in introducing this statement, discussed not only the provisions of this motion but other parts of the agricultural program, it is in order for hon. members on this side of the house to make comments, not as the minister did on the adequacy of the government's over-all program but rather on the inadequacy of the government's over-all program.

Mr. Pickersgill: Before the hon. member proceeds, I should like to support what he has said on the point of order because it will arise in connection with other hon. members over here. I was listening to the hon. member for Assiniboia very carefully. What he was saying was that instead of doing what is recommended in the resolution, certain other things should be done first.