

Supplementary Estimates

He did not even deign to answer the question. The answer, of course, was no. What is the difference between the Prime Minister spending six days in the Arctic and six days finding out how people in poverty live in this country? The answer is that it is very pleasant to go to the Arctic, especially when you are accompanied by hosts of photographers, reporters and television cameras and you can get all dressed up, pose with Eskimo girls, beat drums, dance, and have pictures of you flooding back to the newspapers of the country and the television screens all across Canada. But slums make a very poor background for television cameras, for news pictures and for stories that come back. Poverty is a very unpleasant thing to look at—it is not very pretty. The Prime Minister did not think he would like to have the photographers down there taking pictures of the conditions existing in the just society that he and his government said they were going to create. So, he simply pretends that poverty does not exist. He looks the other way.

That is the kind of Prime Minister we have developing this so-called just society. That is why to him unemployment is just a statistic.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member, but I am afraid his time has expired.

Some hon. Members: Continue.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is there unanimous consent to allow the hon. member to continue?

Some hon. Members: No.

Mr. Hees: It just so happens that I had finished my remarks. Thank you all the same. It is kind of you to give me that consideration!

Mr. Dinsdale: The government does not want to hear about poverty.

Mr. A. P. Gleave (Saskatoon-Biggar): I should like to say, with regard to this bill and the moneys it provides, that significant amounts of this money affect the people in the constituency which I represent and indeed the people all across western Canada. In making his brief comments, the minister said that he wanted to take this opportunity to point out some things to members who have been misled regarding certain facts related to these estimates and this bill. Having been out in Saskatchewan, it seems to me that if the minister thinks members of this House were

misled, speaking in the vernacular, "he ain't seen nothin' yet". He was out in Saskatchewan, as I was, and if he listened as I did he should have found that a great many farmers believe that they were misled. In other words, they thought they were being led down the garden path.

When we look at the estimates contained in this bill we have to consider their purpose as stated by responsible ministers. The Minister announced that \$100 million would be made available as an income supplement which would see the western farmers over the hump. When we look at this program closely, we find that there is no firm undertaking to spend \$100 million. Indeed, if we consider whether that amount of money is going to be spent we must realize that the restrictions on the farmers are such, and the proposals inherent in the statements of the responsible minister are such, that many farmers will be prevented from taking part in this program. Of course, that may be just as well, because if enough of them took part in the program to achieve the declared intention of the government, that is taking out of wheat production 22 million acres in western Canada, we might very well be headed for a considerable disaster. But I do not think it will happen and the good common sense of the farmers will prevent such a catastrophe.

This proposal affects the livelihood of approximately 190,000 permit holders in western Canada. It is one thing to pass legislation which would permit these people to either take advantage of such a program or stay out of it, but it is another thing to propose a plan which does not give this large number of farmers a real choice. This is the point at which this bill goes past the ordinary prerogatives of the government. The government may have advisers who think that they have within themselves the knowledge to plan production on the individual farms in western Canada and to tell the individual farmer what he may or may not do. They propose to send inspectors to his farm to see that he does what he is supposed to do, and to see that he does it in the way in which it is supposed to be done. But I suggest that any department or any group of men or women who think they can undertake such a task are indeed taking a great deal upon themselves.

The hon. member who spoke just before me mentioned the difficulty of ensuring that a certain group of businessmen do a certain thing, but when you deal with a group of businessmen you are dealing with a relatively