

discriminating situation which has lasted too long and which compels our farmers to pay more for their feed grain than the Western farmers.

• (2030)

I also hope, Mr. Speaker, that the Quebec government will accept, as several provinces have already done, the federal-provincial arrangement which enables the farmer who wishes to sell his farm for health reasons or due to his advanced age, or because he can no longer make a decent living there, to take advantage of the special legislation passed to that effect. Thus he can sell his farm, thanks to the guarantee of a farm loan and the subsidy provided up to \$3,500, payable to the owner, so that he may settle elsewhere.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to point out that I am most upset about the injustice made to the farmers of the Maskinongé and Saint-Maurice constituencies, which are part of the federal constituency of Bethier, concerning the \$400 subsidy made available to them by the federal Department of Agriculture.

It is known that the provincial Department of Agriculture has already designated a certain number of constituencies where the damage caused to harvests by the heavy rains of last summer has been most disastrous. However, the constituency of Bethier has been included since it is part of zone No. 10. That leads one to believe that when it rains in Bethier, it does not rain in the neighbouring constituency, particularly over a period of three or four months. I have seen myself harvests damaged to the extent of 50 or 60 per cent, and a good part of them burnt in the fields in those two constituencies.

That discrimination between constituencies has been most unfortunate, and I only hope that the provincial Department of Agriculture will reconsider its decision, for the federal Department of Agriculture informed me that that decision must come from Quebec City and that the federal government would be ready to compensate those who suffered losses.

Mr. Speaker, as we all know, although winter makes some people happy, nevertheless it causes problems to several others because of the increased unemployment it brings. I think the government has found a good solution with its Local Initiatives Program to create temporary jobs. My riding of Berthier received a great deal of encouragement because more than 50 projects were recently accepted in an equal number of parishes for an amount of \$1,500,000 which created 805 jobs this winter. It is an efficient program which will have beneficial socio-economic effects in the whole riding.

Now, what about the Opportunities for Youth Program presently being carried out, under which a good number of students will find jobs to pay for their education next year, the New Horizons Program for older people which provides occupations for them, student exchanges to allow them to know their country better or learn a second language and youth hostels providing holidays at a low cost for the young?

Is that not a positive record liable to improve the social climate in a country, or area or riding? Judging from the opinions of the members of the opposition, one would

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have the impression of living in the most tyrannized country in the world when it is exactly the opposite!

In the past few weeks I was called upon to participate in the work of the Special Committee of the House of Commons on Food Prices. There is discomfort among the public because of the unjustified increase in food prices, and I think that Parliament was right in setting up that committee.

In his analysis of the budget, the financial critic of the Progressive Conservative Party reaches the conclusion that we should immediately freeze all salaries, prices, interests and dividends for a 90-day period and then impose general controls. How can he reach such a sudden conclusion when the committee has not even submitted its preliminary report to the House, as it was asked to after 60 days?

On the same occasion, the leader of the Progressive Conservative Party (Mr. Stanfield) was never categorical in his speech; he was content to say that he would not hesitate to apply this control "if necessary".

Where does that conclusion come from then, that the situation is now critical, and that the government should control salaries and prices for both workers and producers?

We must bear in mind that price and wage control would create many more problems that it would solve. Already, the United States and Great Britain who had implemented them are hastening to repeal them.

This government has other means of bringing to reason manufacturers, wholesalers and retailers who abuse the consumers.

Mr. Speaker, tomorrow is the deadline for those who want to appear before the Electoral Boundaries Commission and state their case and that of their constituents concerning the changes proposed by the commissioners.

I am convinced that not only my riding, but all rural ridings should have almost no change.

The rural characteristics and the homogeneity of the Berthier riding which I represent must remain as they are if we want the member to represent it efficiently.

Mr. Speaker, the time put at my disposal will soon end and I want to conclude by expressing to my constituents the pride which I feel representing them and all the optimism and trust which I feel toward the economic and social future of the riding of Berthier. Under the direction of the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau), under whom I have the honour to serve, I hope for still better days.

[*English*]

**Mr. Jake Epp (Provencher):** Mr. Speaker, in rising to speak in the budget debate one is faced not so much with the question of what has gone before but, principally, what will the budget do for us in the future? Despite that, Canadians are asked by this government to put their trust in the government and its economic planning. It still insists on wistfully looking into the cracked crystal-ball of the Liberal party and coming to the conclusion that it muddled through before, and if it hangs on it may just muddle through again.