

*Rural Development*

it will consume ARDA's thinking in the years ahead.

In this regard we must ask ourselves what is best for Canadians. Is it some assistance, some welfare measure, which will eradicate the poverty pockets in Canada, or is it some measure that will develop the undeveloped resources across this country and allow Canadians to provide for themselves? It is my firm belief that Canadians want the opportunity to provide for themselves and do not want the government buying their land and saying: Go into the city; we will educate you there and then you can fend for yourselves. This might suit a lot of people but it is my belief that farmers are farmers for a number of specific reasons. One is that they love the freedom of farming. Second, they love the outdoor work. Neither of these desires can be met by city employment. If this legislation is passed and projected into the future it will take people off the farms and put them in city employment where they will lose the freedom they cherish and their desire to work outdoors away from the smog and fog of city life will not be met.

Therefore we must consider this legislation very carefully. I am in favour of making every effort to eradicate poverty pockets in Canada if it is the intention of the government to help the small farmer to farm in these poverty pockets. Twenty or thirty years ago the farmer was sustained to a large extent by his egg cheque, his poultry cheque, and in some parts of Canada by the pulpwood he could cut during the winter. In one province premiums of over \$10 per hog are paid. These premiums are in effect a subsidy. As a farmer myself I am not against subsidies. In fact, I am as much for subsidies as the next fellow. But in effect a subsidy of \$10 is paid to the farmer for every hog he raises. This payment is made in a province of Canada where in rural areas the farm income is perhaps the largest in the country.

Therefore I would ask, Mr. Speaker, how does this legislation correspond with other policies of the government? Recently the government announced a price of \$4 a hundred for milk. Whom is this supposed to help sustain? The answer is, the small farmer. What will this program cost? It will cost something like \$10 million a year. I am not opposed to it; I think it is a good idea. But on the one hand you are sustaining the small farmer and on the other you are trying to buy him out and force him off the land.

[Mr. Horner (Acadia).]

We are told that a feed grain agency is to be set up in eastern Canada. This will allow the small farmer to buy grain at a price he can afford and will enable him to carry out his feeding or farming operation, whatever the case may be. With regard to the feed grain policy, in the province of Ontario, for example, something like 80 per cent of the production on agricultural land is produced by 30 per cent of the farmers, another 30 per cent of farmers produce 17 per cent and another 30 per cent the remaining 3 per cent. Taking that province as an example I say that the feed grain agency is not going to maintain or sustain the 30 per cent producing 80 per cent of the production. What the feed grain policy may do is to improve the assistance to the 30 per cent who are producing 3 per cent of the production. So I say to the minister that before he catapults the government of Canada into state farming and state agriculture he should review the over-all agricultural policies to see whether or not the intent of this legislation is carried out in other policies.

• (5:10 p.m.)

Who would be most affected by the feed grain policy, for example, or the freight assistance on feed grain coming from western Canada? The answer is, the large farmers. This may be good from the viewpoint of this legislation, but what I am trying to point out here is that there is no continuity in government legislation. On the one hand, in many cases we are sustaining the small farmer; on the other hand, we feel that we must buy him out and move the government into state farming. This is exactly what this piece of legislation does.

We are told that \$50 million will be provided under agreements with the provinces. The agency is prepared to spend this \$50 million in the next five years in buying up small farms. I suppose if I were 70 years old and had no dependants I would be the first one to approach the agency for it to buy my small farm. I suppose many farmers will greet this legislation with the view that if an agency is prepared to buy their land they are prepared to sell. But I would like to know how far this will catapult the government of Canada into state agriculture. In other words, the funny thing about legislation is that once it is on the statute books the money involved very rarely diminishes. We have \$50 million for five years. From my experience in this house