

Supply—Agriculture

declined by 3.6 per cent, while the cost of commodities and services purchased by farmers have increased by 5 per cent. I have dealt specifically with the dairy industry and just for a moment I should like to direct my remarks to the problems of the hog producers.

This industry is, of course, disappointed and perplexed with the government's action in reducing the premium on grade A hogs from \$3 to \$2 per carcass. The premium of \$3 was established by order in council dated August 24, 1960. With the advent of this program there was encouragement to farmers across Canada to upgrade the quality of their hogs. No sooner had the producers actually implemented this program than the government, on September 12 of this year, reduced the premium from \$3 to \$2 per carcass. It was a matter of some surprise to me, Mr. Chairman, and I am sure to all hon. members of this house to hear the Minister of Agriculture say, shortly after the opening of this session, that this reduction was part of the government's austerity program, and that it was a contribution the hog producers were asked to make towards this austerity program. I urge the Minister of Agriculture to re-implement the premium of \$3. The hog producers of Canada do not appreciate being singled out as one segment of the economy which is required to make a specific contribution over and above the contribution other Canadians are making. The hog producers are suffering the effects of this program, which has been a cave-in, by the gross neglect and mismanagement of this government.

I have tried to deal with the problems having a direct bearing on the dairy industry and the hog producing industry. I ask the Minister of Agriculture to continue whatever efforts he may deem advisable for western agriculture, and to do the best he can for that industry, although it would appear that his efforts in this connection, at least lately, are receiving a somewhat mixed reception. I make no comments specifically on that at this time. I do implore the Minister of Agriculture to raise his sights and look easterly beyond the lakehead, to give some relief from the serious problems which are now facing agriculture in eastern Canada.

Mr. Bigg: Would the hon. member permit a question?

Mr. Honey: Yes.

Mr. Bigg: I was following the hon. member very carefully but I am a little confused by his figures concerning the price of pop and of milk. As I understand it, the price of pop is 1½ cents an ounce retail. Now, at this figure 40 ounces of milk would cost 70 cents.

Mr. Honey: I do not follow the hon. member exactly but I did mention, as the hon. member will recall that, as far as the milk program for school age children was concerned it was necessary to have a program of education. Whether the children are drinking pop because it is cheaper or whether they are drinking pop because their parents do not recognize the nutritional value of milk, the point is that we must have, in conjunction with this program, an educational program.

Mr. Peters: I am very pleased that the debate has finally switched from western agriculture to eastern agriculture. As long as it was on western agriculture I was happy to leave it there. There seemed to be a desire on the part of hon. members, and I certainly sympathize with it, to have some continuity in the debate. It seemed rather unreasonable to introduce eastern agriculture into the western agriculture section of the debate if this were not necessary. However, the change has been made.

There is a second side to agriculture that has not received the support, interest or enthusiasm that western agriculture has received. I once asked a gentleman from western Canada to speak at a meeting. When he arrived I asked him what his profession was. He told me he was a school teacher. I asked him if he knew anything about the farm situation. He said, of course, I come from western Canada and I know all about farm problems; nobody would be elected from western Canada who did not. Perhaps this is true, but I think sometimes some agriculturists across the country, and in particular some farmers, wonder if agriculture in western Canada is not synonymous with wheat, and the knowledge you would have to have to be an expert in agriculture might boil down to the knowledge necessary for wheat production. Let me hasten to say that those who are capable of speaking on this subject have a very complex subject to understand.

However, Mr. Chairman, we have other problems which I feel have not received the attention that the problems of western Canada have received. It may be that we in eastern Canada represent ridings that have a mixed economy. In some cases that means an economy that is not totally rural, as it were, but has other factors in it. We may tend, therefore, not to be as interested in one problem in the same way we would be if we were representing only one aspect of the economy. Speaking of eastern agriculture, one should keep in mind the fact that in the federation of agriculture there are something like 83 commodity groups.

I have been interested the last few months in listening to the speeches that have been