

*Economic Conditions in Rural Communities*

other countries. Instead, there was a constant drift to the cities.

We are told that within a generation 90 per cent of the population will become city-dwellers. A recent report indicates that the most favoured areas for urban growth in the next 25 years will be the Niagara peninsula and the constituency I am privileged to represent in the Fraser Valley, both, because of climatic and soil conditions, about the best agricultural land in the country.

**An hon. Member:** Next to Norfolk.

**Mr. Rose:** Pollution will be concentrated in these areas and thousands of acres will be blacktopped because the redundant sons and daughters of rural Canada will gravitate to the growth areas having experienced the problems of living in rural areas. They will consequently depopulate the other regions of Canada, notably the Prairies.

Of course—this was the fear expressed many times on the agricultural committee's tour recently to hear representations on Bill C-176—this depopulation will lead to a weakening of political power because we have, at least in essence, representation by population. But an even more serious concern in my opinion is the trend to larger and larger agricultural units in western and prairie Canada and the coincidental phenomenon of more and more apartment dwellers, renters or tenants in the cities. It follows that if you have larger and larger agricultural units in a depopulated section of Canada and consequently a diminution of landholders in total numbers, and you have more and more renters in the urban areas, there will be a larger and larger number of landless people. They may not be a rural peasantry but they might well show a special concern about the urban problems of our society. They might be an urban peasantry.

This is what has been going on. I think it continues to go on. When you get people out of the prairie region and you have larger agricultural units, you do not remove all the problems; you create problems in the cities because of the effects of this concentration upon the quality of life. You have problems of housing, pollution, transportation, education, police costs, delinquency and all the rest of it. On the Prairies, of course, the big land owners are often faceless corporations. These new, larger land owners, often absentee land owners, will become the new landed gentry. There is a great opportunity for the new landless tenants to become the new villains. I think we should be concerned about this.

I know it can be argued with some justification that no one should own land anyway; that it is ridiculous, except in the case of large financial corporations, to turn land over from generation to generation on the basis of ownership. Leasing might be much better. Incidentally, some of the suspicions attached to the new marketing legislation have their roots in this very concern by people who live in rural Canada, particularly prairie Canada, that if you concentrate our people in a particular area of Canada, Ontario, the Niagara peninsula or British Columbia in the Lower Fraser Valley, or perhaps Quebec, what you have is a gravitation of political strength to

[Mr. Rose.]

those areas. Consequently, it does not matter how a particular party appeals to a particular area; the strength lies with numbers and it lies within a certain area. So after a hundred years are we not in danger of completing the cycle—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. It being six o'clock, I do now leave the chair.

At six o'clock the House took recess.

**AFTER RECESS**

The House resumed at 8 p.m.

**Mr. A. B. Douglas (Assiniboia):** Mr. Speaker, I am grateful for the opportunity to take part in this debate. However, I regret the bitter and unfair wording of the motion proposed by the hon. member for Peace River (Mr. Baldwin) who is becoming famous for vitriolic statements which almost invariably exaggerate the situation far beyond recognition.

It is my intention to address most of my remarks to farm policy, but I should like first of all to record my opposition to the suggestion in the motion that this government has "humiliated the disadvantaged." The hon. member cannot be referring to the old age pensioners who have little other income, because they will shortly be receiving a substantial increase in their guaranteed income supplement. Neither can he be referring to the unemployed, who have had an interim increase of 10 per cent and will soon have the benefit of much greater increases.

In addition, family allowances for low-income families will be increased from 100 per cent to 166 per cent in a very few months. The Canada Assistance Plan, which is administered by the provinces but supported on a dollar for dollar basis by the federal treasury, is constantly being improved from province to province. More and more housing is being provided, with federal assistance, for disadvantaged families. Policies for increased employment are beginning to be effective, and inflation has subsided. That record alone would be good enough to persuade me to vote against this motion if it should come to a vote.

As I said earlier, I intend to devote the little time I have—and it is far too short—to a discussion of the many things that the government has been doing for the farmers of Canada, particularly for the prairie farmers. I do this because the motion refers to the government's agricultural policies. On October 29 the minister responsible for the Wheat Board, the Minister of Manpower and Immigration (Mr. Lang), tabled in the House of Commons a set of proposals for the prairie grain industry, including a very interesting grain income stabilization proposal. I had an opportunity to discuss these matters with several groups of farmers in my constituency during the Christmas break and I feel I can make some useful suggestions about some of the proposals. Incidentally, I refer to the grain income stabilization plan because an item of \$100