

Mr. CASTLEDEN: On the matter of parity you painted us a picture that agriculture today is in a poor position—the costs of operation are constantly increasing and your returns are constantly decreasing. What is going to be the predicament of agriculture if those trends continue for a couple of years so you are not going to get any stability in agriculture? Will it mean that people will have to leave the farms, that agriculture is going to become you might say bankrupt? At the census in 1931 we had 37 per cent of our people on the farm but the census of 1951 showed we had 20 per cent on the farm. What is your estimate of what is going to happen to agriculture unless something is done, what is going to be the predicament of agriculture if there is nothing done to stabilize prices?

Mr. HANSEN: I believe one reason why certain farms are constantly growing in size in Saskatchewan is because people today must farm a larger acreage to provide a living for themselves and that is why we have the problem of people leaving the farm. This year it has been the case again, particularly in the northeast. I know of dozens of cases where people have left their machinery standing on high ground and gone to Kitimat, B.C., to get a job because there is no chance to meet their needs and they are just going deeper in debt each year. I know of cases at Porcupine Plains where due to recurrent flooding conditions in the last three or four years they cannot even sell the land. They are getting out and are coming back to the land eventually when conditions are better and prices better, and these natural causes have also been a factor in encouraging farmers to produce more to attain the same end, you might say.

Mr. CASTLEDEN: In other words the farm control or factory farm system will increase?

Mr. HANSEN: They are increasing, yes.

Mr. YOUNG: I think in reply to Mr. Castleden's question if something is not done to improve the relative position of agriculture we will have a great deal more difficulty in the future. We will have a lower standard of living for the farmers, their purchasing power will be reduced and I think further than that which is very serious for Canada we will have more of a tendency to mine the soil not to keep up the soil as it should be kept up. That is something I have always noticed during periods of low prices. I think in the thirties we did more damage to our soil than we have ever repaired since. Under those conditions farmers take everything out of it and put nothing back because they can't afford to put anything back. You were drawing your money out of the banks, drawing the fertility out of the soil and selling your products for nothing because you had to do it. That is one of the bad results you can obtain unless a better balance is restored to agriculture.

The CHAIRMAN: Can we get back to the brief now, No. 2? Any questions on it?

Mr. ARGUE: On page 2. I have listed a number of items that it is suggested might be answered and I wonder if I might ask a question or two on the item entitled "Box-car allocation." We have had some discussion of box-car allocation in the House. I am wondering how much of a problem the farmers' unions feel it is and whether the farmers do feel that they are being forced to deliver grain to an elevator other than their own choice and whether there is a genuine and growing demand amongst farmers who want to obtain legislation so that they do in fact have a chance to deliver grain to the elevator of their own choice? Is it a synthetic demand, a demand that somebody has created or is it a genuine demand among prairie farmers to get a bad situation corrected?