

free choice goes to a district where he knows that the crops may be uncertain, where drought is liable to strike, is it the fault of society that he does that, or is it his own fault?

Hon. Mr. Horner: The honourable senator knows there are districts where that occasionally occurs, and in some of the best parts of western Canada.

Hon. Mr. Crerar: I know that and I know in those particular districts if you get three good crops you can stand one poor one.

Hon. Mr. Horner: Well, you paid for it in your levy.

Hon. Mr. Crerar: The levy is paid, of course.

Well, I am interested in farming in Manitoba, and when I bought land I tried to use ordinary good sense in its selection, and there has never been a complete crop failure yet on it. But I may remind the honourable senator from Blaine Lake that I paid for that benefit in the price I gave for the land. And after all that, the Government in its wisdom comes along and in effect says, "Well, you must make your contributions to this individual who has gone to the sand plains and is trying to farm on a sand hill." Now, there is an element of injustice in that.

Hon. Mr. Horner: What is unusual in that? We do it in other forms of taxation and in every other line. I can see nothing unusual about that principle at all.

Hon. Mr. Crerar: Honourable senators, it grieves me sorely to see the distance down the socialist road that my honourable friend from Blaine Lake has travelled.

Some Hon. Senators: Oh, oh.

Hon. Mr. Crerar: When I first came to this house I thought there was no greater champion of free enterprise than my honourable friend. How he has changed! It is sad to contemplate.

I come back to the bill. It contains discrimination in another way. Western Canada is not the only part of the country where farmers have crop failures from drought and other causes. I read with interest yesterday or today that the heaviest rainfall on record for the month of July has happened in these regions this month, and this at a time when farmers are putting up their hay.

Hon. Mr. Brunt: To what district does my friend refer, the whole of Ontario or the Ottawa Valley district?

Hon. Mr. Crerar: I am speaking of the district from Ottawa to Montreal, if my honourable friend wishes to be precise in the information he receives.

Now what happens if this hay crop is lost, as I am sure much of it will be?

Hon. Mr. Hugessen: Let Manitoba pay for it.

Hon. Mr. Crerar: I will be kind enough to say this: whatever measure this Government may introduce, I do not think it would try to saddle Manitoba with that loss.

What about the farmers in Nova Scotia who may lose an apple crop, or the fishermen in Newfoundland or elsewhere who may have a bad year? What about the thousands of individuals in our society who run little businesses and who, because of conditions beyond their control, operate at a loss? What about the thousands of bankruptcies that have taken place in this country over the past few years? Is the Government justified in saving the farmer from bankruptcy, and not saving the small merchant on the corner who has gone behind and lost all the money he put into his business?

Honourable senators, I am making this statement, and I suspect some of my friends from western Canada will accuse me of being a traitor to the farmers' interests—which accusation, I may say, does not bother me the slightest. I say you can't have legislation of this kind without discrimination; and, as a principle in government, discrimination between citizens is an evil thing, wherever it is found. If we are to maintain what we call our democratic freedoms, that cannot be done by following this road.

If we want a crop insurance scheme for the farmers of western Canada, this has merit, and is well worth consideration. But if we do have such a scheme there will be those who will clamour to have the Government pay the premiums, and there may be some honourable members sitting in both houses of Parliament who will probably support the idea. As I say, you might have such an insurance scheme, but I recognize the difficulty of working it out. It might be a good idea to have the farmers pay the premiums of such a scheme into a central fund which they themselves controlled, something like a mutual fire insurance company. In any event, I would hope that with such a scheme Governments could be kept out of it. To me it is an amazing circumstance the degree to which our Governments are getting involved in everything. Soon we will expect them to do everything for us. We will lose our self-reliance, and then we will really be ripe for the socialist state.

I do not wish the house to get the impression that I am necessarily opposed to this bill, in what I have said.

Hon. Mr. Aseltine: What?