

*Feed Grain*

ment has turned a blind eye on this extremely important industry. This is an industry on which every one of us is absolutely dependent. I would suggest that probably no member of this House has gone for 48 hours without food, and I would suspect that most have never gone even 24 hours without food.

● (0050)

Farming is the business of food production, and yet what do we see in this country in terms of support for the agricultural industry? A 25 cent loaf of bread, even if the farmers gave their wheat away, would still cost 23 cents. That simply shows that farmers are not getting much of a fair shake. I would like to point out the fact that the agricultural industry is certainly an industry that has pulled its own weight in society and it deserves credit.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Malone:** At this late hour of five minutes to one, we could take a look at some information released by the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Whelan) who, some moments ago, arrived from a Liberal fund raising meeting. It is stated that in 1940 a farmer could produce enough—

**Mr. Whelan:** I rise on a point of order, Madam Speaker. I am sure the hon. member would not want to put anything on the record that was incorrect. Most times I find him to be accurate. Let me tell him that I attended the Brampton Rural-Urban night in Brampton, Ontario. It was no fund raising meeting but a public meeting called by the Brampton Board of Trade.

**Mr. Malone:** I will change the word fund to fun. The important thing is that in 1940 a farmer could produce enough to feed himself, his wife and ten other people, but in 1975 a farmer can produce enough to feed himself, his wife and 50 other people. What I am trying to point out is that production by farm people, wherever they might be in this country, has significantly increased, but it is of ultimate importance that we realize that farmers are leaving farms in this country because they are not receiving the support of society as a whole. How do we know that? The fact of the matter is that every day, for the last 20 years, 31 farmers have gone out of business. That shows that agriculture is a kind of industry that is either unpopular or is receiving insufficient support. In talking to people in rural communities across the country I find that quite obviously the latter is the case.

Let us take a look at what a former Liberal member of this House, now a Senator, the Hon. Harry Hays, has to say about Canadian support of agriculture. He said:

With the exception of Denmark, Canada has the lowest percentage of public support for the agriculture industry of any country.

I want to say that out of farmers' net income Canada provides, through support of one form or another, 1.7 per cent, the United States provides 17 per cent, France provides 50 per cent, and the U.K. provides 67 per cent. This country ranks lowest in terms of the way it supports its agricultural industry. This leads me to point out that there are three sectors of our society that continually receive extremely poor support from the government, and that simply do not have the kind of clout they should have to

[Mr. Malone.]

give these industries the support they need. Those three are agriculture, fisheries and forestry.

Two of those industries deal with food production. The irony lies in the fact that, on a world basis, food takes up 40 per cent of our disposable income, and yet not one nation in the world gives top priority to food production. What perhaps is more curious still is that most nations put the lowest priority on agriculture, and I will demonstrate this again later when I deal with the strike situation and show that a very low priority is given to people in the agricultural industry who are affected.

The Minister of Agriculture has stated in some of the information that he circulated to our offices that farmers get fewer subsidy dollars than most other sectors of our economy. The average tariff protection for farm products is 8 per cent, but for non-farm products it is 16 per cent. This is another proof that farming in this nation is not protected. In Canada more than one third of all jobs are directly or indirectly related to agriculture. That simply emphasizes the fact that we should be giving the highest priority to agriculture because it affects one third of all the people in this country.

Let us take a look at the present situation, at the strike damage and at how it affects the agricultural industry. What are we doing about it? I should like to point out that here is an industry whose members cannot strike because of its very structure, because of the way farmers are organized, and because they lack the mechanism with which to fight back. Of the 35 weeks following the start of the crop year, at the end of July, 1974, there were only six weeks of free movement of grain to the port of Vancouver. The rest of the time there were either strike actions or derailments of trains on the trackage.

Let us take a look at the agricultural industry as it relates to what is coming up soon. In this year ten contracts which will affect the movement of grain out of Vancouver come up for renewal, three of those being related to railroads, two to the Government of Canada, two to longshoremen—one to the workers and the other to the foremen—one to the handlers, one to tugboat operators, and one to marine pilots. Every one of those contracts has the potential to stop the grain industry. Yet do we ever see legislation to make these contracts run out at the same time, or even to give compensation to the agricultural industry which cannot fight back?

Tonight we are back in the House again, this time because strike damage is being done to the agricultural industry in the province of Quebec, more specifically to a group of people who are not in a position to fight back. Farmers are not in a position to protect themselves from strike action.

To make the situation even worse, labour organizations are striking against management, thereby incurring major expenses. Instead of either labour or management absorbing the expense, it is charged to farmers. This is done through demurrage charges which, I charge, is something which is illegal because there is no precedent in our society for two people incurring a direct cash cost and charging it to a third party. This is no longer merely a nuisance or an inconvenience. It is a direct expense which is finally charged to a third party. Farmers do not have collective bargaining powers. When their prices go up they