

that our government has moved to a better position in this regard and that we have made some concessional sales. But in the interim we have lost a tremendous number of markets, a fact which is well documented by the private planning commission which submitted an excellent report on this matter.

At the same time as the United States was making concessional sales it was developing cash sales. Over the past ten years Canadian agricultural exports to the European Economic Community and to the United Kingdom rose 10 per cent, while U.S. sales rose 37 per cent and were four times the value of ours. This does not speak well of our government's performance in those years. We also know that Canada concentrated on a slower growing product, wheat rather than coarse grains, and on a slower growing market, the United Kingdom rather than the European Economic Community. I suggest that the government has a responsibility to do something in this area.

● (3:40 p.m.)

The reason for the bill now before us is that in the early 1960s more U.S. wheat moved through concessional sales and it is suggested that these sales were used as an unfair bargaining lever to force countries to purchase a higher proportion of commercial wheat from the United States. This had a tremendous impact on world markets and adversely affected the Canadian wheat market. If the government had moved at that time or in the last few years to make more concessional sales before it lost the market, we would not be faced with this bill. At the same time, the United States passed Public Law 480 which depressed wheat exports, especially during the 1955-60 period and perhaps again in the past three years as large Soviet and Chinese purchases tapered off. Public Law 480 was one of the main reasons Canada lost markets when she was urgently in need of them.

I am sure we all hope that we can assist the agricultural economy. We know that farmers in Canada have never received their fair share of the national income. This is not a myth, it is a fact of life and the most recent DBS figures indicate how true it is. We also know that in order to provide assistance to people who have no cash input, we must provide some type of legislation such as the bill before us. This is not the whole answer, however.

As we go through western Canada in particular we find that the elevator men have been made bill collectors, because if the farmer does not pay his municipal taxes the elevator man must not accept his grain; and if he does accept it he must deduct the municipal taxes from the delivery. I hope the minister will comment on this situation. This type of policing regulation should be taken out of the elevator man's hands. We know how difficult it is for the farmers to bring their grain to the elevator and receive only half the amount they should receive because of the amount of their cash advance, and then to repay the loans they had to obtain in order to keep going.

No consideration is given to income and return on investment. I am sure the people in rural Canada are

Prairie Grain Advance Payments Act

looking to this House of Commons and wondering whether we are obsessed with the situation in large urban centres and have forgotten the problems of rural areas. It is high time we looked after the basic industries, which of course includes the fishing industry. If we did, then this type of legislation would not be necessary.

All this planning which we thought was so necessary could have been brought about not too many years ago. Our brokerage firms are not very concerned with selling Canadian grain. If they have a ship sitting in Australia, they will fill it before bringing it back to Canada to haul grain to an export position. The manner in which brokerage firms handle grain should come under review. This is the type of situation that lends itself to the provisions of Bill C-239. It would not be necessary to debate it today if we were really concerned about the over-all cash input of our prairie economy.

When we look at this bill, Mr. Speaker, we must ask why the farmer is not getting his fair share and has to be assisted. When we consider, for instance, the cost of farm machinery, we realize that the government has not taken any steps to institute an investigation under the Combines Investigations Act into this question even though Dr. Barber suggested that this should be done. People are having to use their cash advances to pay exorbitant prices for machinery. When the agricultural producer next marks his ballot he will remember this situation and how little this government has done to bring about the type of programs needed to ensure a return on his investment.

I am sure many other members wish to speak on this bill. As we look at the entire agricultural area we wonder whether bills of this nature are introduced only to get votes. In an address to 250 people, the Premier of Saskatchewan said that he did not want to tip his hand on when an election would be held in Saskatchewan, but that "it would be very nice to have those cheques in the hands of farmers before an election." I suggest the politicians are playing with the lives of the rural dwellers of Canada when they make this type of statement. It makes me think there is collusion between federal and provincial parties to ensure more votes at election time.

We all know that one of the greatest needs is to obtain a viable, economic farm unit. To obtain this the farmer must receive a reasonable price for his produce. While we will no doubt support Bill C-239 in order that it can go to committee—probably with many amendments to be made there—it is not the answer. It cannot be the answer to say, "We will give you more money today" and then vote it back, saying, "You are not getting a fair return on your investment". A short while ago I illustrated that in 1969 the breaking point was 4 cents per bushel of grain.

How can rural Canada remain in existence with the legislation before us? At one time it was said there are various ways of being a successful farmer, and I suppose it is the same thing when we look at cash advances. Many farmers will not take cash advances because they know the implications. It used to be said that all a farmer required was a strong back and a weak mind, but nowadays we know that a farmer must have a good head and