

May I read a couple of paragraphs from a speech by R. C. Brown, vice-president of United Grain Growers Limited, about the Canada Grains Council. He said:

By the very nature of its membership, the Canada Grains Council will have a primary need to adequately communicate within its own ranks and with the public at large. I have been tremendously disturbed by how little Canadians know about the mechanics and economic importance of grain sales. Of all people, grain producers are most in need of information. Comparatively few of them are aware of the separate and distinct roles of Government, the Board of Grain Commissioners, the Canadian Wheat Board and the Agents of the Board in the marketing process.

The need for greatly improved communication however, goes far beyond the forum of the Council and the Canadian public. In the eyes of the customers, actual and potential, the world over, the Canadian grain industry must develop and maintain an image that is bright and attractive. Whatever part price may play in developing market opportunities, quality of product and goodwill must go with it hand in hand. To this end the best communication will be none too good.

That speech refers to my earlier point concerning communication. The problems and benefits of our agriculture must be made known not only to our own people, but to all the world. Moneys spent on research by the federal government in the past have been well spent. It is important that we establish better qualities and grades. It is important that we keep up with the rest of the world, but what have we spent on market research? The answer is 1 per cent. What is the sense of growing or producing something without knowing what our markets will be? It is absolutely ridiculous that people in the agricultural industry should continue to produce, produce and produce without the slightest idea of how, where or if their produce will be sold. It is a distinct responsibility of this government to carry out a complete market research job for the people in the agricultural industry.

● (5:20 p.m.)

Some hon. Members: Hear, Hear.

Mr. Cobbe: The people in our agricultural industry are capable of producing and they are capable of diversification. They have proved this. But what guidelines do they have? How do they know what to diversify to? How are we to know the potential markets around the world? Are we to keep on producing wheat until it is running out of our ears, as it is now, or are we supposed to give these people some type of guideline? There are people in areas adapted to the growing of barley but the producers cannot afford to

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grow barley. They do not know how much, if any, barley will be used next year or if they will have the opportunity to sell. This is only one of many varieties of crops that people are capable of producing in abundance. When I refer to these areas, I am talking about producing economically.

The cost-price squeeze has always been a term used when talking about agriculture, but the problem has multiplied because people are not producing what they are best suited to produce in their areas. These people should be allowed to produce what they can best produce and in the cheapest way so they have an opportunity to stay in the agricultural industry.

If we do not study the problem and come up with an answer, all other segments of agriculture will suffer from our over-abundance of wheat. People will automatically change to raising beef, pork, fowl and feed grain. What will this do to people already in the industry? There is a tremendous possibility even in the oilseed industry that their total market will be destroyed if we do not come up with a control production, if you want to call it that—control to the extent of how we are able to market.

In my area we have the FRED program. This is a cost-sharing program between the federal and provincial governments. I am very impressed with the amount of money that the federal government has chosen to put into this area in order to increase the productivity and standard of living of these people. The program is partially financed by the federal government with the complete organization and project planning of people in our provincial government, but with the understanding that people in the area will be consulted about what they believe are the best programs. I am disturbed that this is not taking place. I am concerned about cost-sharing programs which the federal government enters into without having some say in how the money is to be spent. There are area boards set up in this area, but it appears they are only for the purpose of keeping the people in the area happy. They make recommendations but very seldom are they listened to. To my knowledge these recommendations are never put into effect. I am concerned about this problem. I feel that if we enter into cost-sharing programs in the future we must have a little more say in exactly what takes place.

I have found that many people in my constituency are concerned about the student loans situation. I am happy to see there is