

*Prairie Grain Advance Payments Act*

that was made back in 1960. The Conservative government was in power at that time and backbenchers supporting the government made such charges. That just shows the value of having backbenchers express their opinions on these matters. I submit that backbenchers who represent constituencies in western Canada speak the truth when telling hon. members of the problems of western farmers.

I wish to refer again to my remarks of August 6, 1960, as reported on page 7693:

I have reason to believe that the present wheat board policy in determining its daily selling price for Canadian wheat offerings to domestic and foreign buyers is too rigid, and that as a result of this inflexibility we have lost foreign sales which should have been available to our western producers. I am aware that those who do not agree with my remarks will charge that I am trying to interfere with the orderly system of marketing of western grain. I hasten to say that if such a system solves or will solve the problem of the western grain surplus, then I will support it wholeheartedly. On the other hand, if the present orderly system of marketing works to the disadvantage of the western grain producers whom I represent, then I suggest that some of the conditions in this system should be changed.

In so many words I have said the Minister without Portfolio from Saskatoon-Humboldt is not competent to deal with wheat matters. I ask, how can any man charged with the responsibility for overseeing one third of the operation of the wheat industry, without knowing what the ministers charged with responsibility for the other two thirds, are doing, possibly do a good job in selling wheat or administering any phase of the wheat industry. Only one minister ought to be responsible for wheat matters. At present the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce (Mr. Pepin) has a primary responsibility in this field. That is not good enough.

If I were charged with responsibility for deciding our wheat Policy, I should make sure that one minister was responsible for selling wheat. It is folly to have three ministers overseeing one industry. They cannot do a satisfactory job. For that reason, I urge the government to allow one minister to handle all matters connected with wheat. I do not care whether it is the Minister of Agriculture, the Minister without Portfolio (Mr. Lang), or any other minister. It is important to concentrate responsibility for all matters pertaining to wheat under one minister. As I have said before, our primary problem lies in our lack of markets. We shall not solve our problems by making available interest free loans for the drying of grain. If the government is to

[Mr. McIntosh.]

tackle our wheat problem it ought to tackle it vigorously. Yet, I doubt that the government will follow my suggestion.

Last January 22, 1960, the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce made the following remarks while speaking on the motion moved by the hon. member for Mackenzie (Mr. Korchinski):

• (3:20 p.m.)

At one point we were getting rather far from Vancouver and from the situation that exists there.

This is just an example of how close he is to this problem. He did not know what the problem was. He thought the problem at Vancouver just concerned a few ships. He said, "we should be congratulated because out of this port this year already we have shipped 5 million bushels more than we did last year". Last year wheat shipments from Canada were not adequate, Mr. Speaker, as the minister knows. Farmers in western Canada had a 6 bushel quota at best which meant they could sell 12 bushels per acre of seeded wheat because, in most cases, only half the farm is cultivated at one time. The average yield on the prairies today is very close to 20 bushels per acre. By simple mathematics, you will see there is a backlog each year of the difference between 12 and 20 which amounts to 8 bushels. The farmers are responsible for storing this amount and problems are created if the grain is not moved. I say the responsibility for moving this grain rests with the government. They have agencies to handle transportation, marketing and so on. If these agencies do not get the necessary leadership, then everything falls apart. That is happening right now and happened under the former Liberal administration.

This problem was rectified under the Conservative administration, so why not adopt their policies? Why not try them? This is all the western farmers want. Perhaps that is the reason the Liberals cannot get support in western Canada. As one hon. member said a few moments ago, the farmers of western Canada are not dumb. They are as well read as any person in Canada and know the situation. They know of the lack of action of this government and if these ministers think for one moment they are fooling the western farmers, they are badly mistaken. If the government wants support in western Canada they must take positive action by seeking the main problem which, I suggest to the minister, is marketing. The Government must try to solve it and then they will get support. This