

and vital significance, commanded very little respect on the part of the government of this country, with the minister cleverly and evasively refusing to reveal to the House and to me that he thought it of such significant import that he would communicate its contents to the government of the United States on a question of crushing importance to this country.

The minister gave me a most evasive answer and, indeed, it would be a clever one if obfuscation is to be regarded as a prime virtue; but his answer was surely not a helpful or meaningful reply to a very serious question, one which can have profound dangerous implications for Canadian citizens in our time and in ages yet to come. I thought for a moment that the minister and the government might have thrown off the cloak of omniscience and recognized that the members of this House might have, through their special committee which was very ably led, come up with something that would have strengthened the hands of the government as they discussed this very important matter with the government of the United States.

I thought they might have realized that there was value and strength in this approach and that their representations might have been powerfully backed had they indicated to Washington that the point of view that Canada apparently heretofore had tentatively presented was backed by the representatives of the Canadian people in this chamber.

All too often, I fear, those now in power in this land forget the principles of representative government and that the people in this chamber collectively represent all the people of Canada. When that truth is lost, the underpinning of parliamentary democracy has been forsaken. What troubles me now and what troubled me on June 23 was whether the government really tried, really exerted and asserted itself to build a case. I wonder if they vigorously compiled and presented powerful arguments against the dangers of the trans-Alaskan route.

I have become deeply disturbed by the timidity and tepidity of the representations that this country makes to other countries on matters affecting in a vital way the interests of Canadian citizens. The other day I heard the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) say in reference to a matter, "I do not think I will make special representations. They know what we think." Do they really? Should a head of government not assert to another head of government matters of this importance? Very often we hear that the French know what we think about arms, the Americans know what we think about Amchitka and the Skagit Valley...but is there no place where the Canadian government presents its case clearly?

I fear that in this pusillanimous correctitude, which is no substitute for vigorous, impressive statesmanship that the government might provide, the land might benefit if from time to time they would drop the cloak of omniscience and look at this chamber and the committees of this House for some help and guidance.

In times past, they who represented this country in the councils of the world found the courage to speak boldly and were able to assert themselves without obfuscation.

*Proceedings on Adjournment Motion*

Macdonald did it; Borden did it. I should like to think that in this twentieth century we could produce someone who would do it as well as a special committee did.

**Mr. P. M. Mahoney (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Finance):** Mr. Speaker, I do not suppose it would make any difference to the colourfully expressed views of the hon. member had he chosen to check his facts between June 23 and today. He would no doubt be interested to learn that the report to which he has referred was transmitted to the Secretary of State of the United States by the Canadian government late last June with the advice that the House had unanimously concurred in the committee's recommendations.

AGRICULTURE—PRAIRIE PROVINCES—ACTION TO  
IMPROVE NET FARM INCOME

**Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton-Melville):** Mr. Speaker, on May 7, I directed a question to the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) arising out of statistics issued by the Dominion Bureau of Statistics in May concerning net farm income. When I first saw those statistics I noted that net farm income in Canada had fallen drastically between 1968 and 1970, particularly in my province of Saskatchewan. Net farm income there had fallen from about \$462 million to \$202 million in a two-year period. This represents a decline of 56.2 per cent.

In these circumstances, and because of my knowledge of the hardships faced by western farmers, I asked the Prime Minister the following question:

In view of the fact that farm income in Saskatchewan has dropped by 56 per cent over two years and in view of the fact that the bills now before the House will do little to alter that situation, is the Prime Minister contemplating any emergency action to try to improve the farm income picture in western Canada?

I would point out again that this decline of 56 per cent represents net income, what the farmer gets as his take-home pay. This alone must indicate to all of us that there is something really wrong with the western economy and that real hardship is facing the farmer. After all, if our income as Members of Parliament, or as private citizens in whatever capacity were to drop by 56 per cent, I believe we would all recognize we were faced with a real emergency. This is the situation of the western farmer. This is why I asked my question and this is why I want to say a few words about the subject tonight.

The parliamentary secretary may get up and say, "Well, we have a stabilization bill before the House and there is \$100 million for farmers in that bill." The bill was first introduced in the House on October 29 of last year. The farmers of western Canada want the \$100 million. All political parties realize this. On June 8 of this year my hon. friend from York South (Mr. Lewis), on behalf of our party, introduced a bill designed to divide the stabilization bill into two parts and enable the \$100 million to be sent out unconditionally to the farmers of western Canada.

On many occasions we and other members of the Conservative party have asked the government to divide the