

## Supply—Agriculture

\$143,109,180.50, in the year 1958-59, \$222-173,607.75, and in the year 1959-60, \$191,626-946, or a total of \$556,909,734.25 for those three years. That was the total compared with a total of \$272,260,350 for the previous three years, or more than twice as much money. Simple as they are, I think these figures point up the fact that the government is taking a very practical and active part in doing something for agriculture.

**Mr. Regier:** Would the hon. member care to say where he got those figures?

**Mr. Southam:** They are taken from the estimates of the Department of Agriculture for the years in question. I should also like to add that the total figure I have given does not include approximately \$58 million allocated to agriculture under the stabilization act which was enacted by the present government to assist agriculture.

In appraising the agricultural situation I was very interested in reading an article on the front page of the *Western Producer*, a representative farm paper published in Saskatchewan. I refer to the issue of Thursday, March 16, 1961. In this paper there is a headline which reads as follows: "Farmers' net income rises about 12 per cent in 1960". I am not implying that the government has done everything I should like to see done as far as agriculture is concerned but I should like to impress on hon. members and the public at large the net result of the agricultural legislation that we have been able to apply. The article elaborates on the headline in these words:

Total net income of Canadian farmers last year rose 12 per cent above a year earlier, reaching an estimated \$1,352,200,000, the dominion bureau of statistics reported last week. The total was up 6.5 per cent from the five-year (1955-59) average of \$1,270,100,000, the bureau said in its annual advance preliminary estimates. Quebec, Manitoba and Alberta were down in net income. British Columbia showed a slight increase. Saskatchewan had the sharpest increase—more than \$100 million at \$354,373,000.

Cash income in 1960 from the sale of farm products was only slightly below the 1959 level. On a commodity basis, the more important reductions were recorded for barley, flaxseed and hogs, while the more important gains were registered for potatoes, tobacco, cattle and calves. There was also a substantial increase in cash advances in farm stored grains in western Canada.

Supplementary payments to farmers in western Canada in 1960 amounted to \$77 million and included payments made under the provisions of the Prairie Farm Assistance Act, the western grain producers' acreage payment plan and the federal-provincial emergency unthreshed grain assistance policy. This is in contrast to 1959 when farmers received \$22 million, most of which was received under the provisions of the Prairie Farm Assistance Act.

**Mr. Boulanger:** May I ask the hon. member a question? Is there an increase for the province of Quebec?

**Mr. Southam:** The article says that Quebec, Manitoba and Alberta were down but British Columbia showed a slight increase. The situation varies, of course, from year to year depending on the type of crop. Last year Saskatchewan was fortunate in having an increase of \$100 million which resulted from the very large wheat crop. These variations in income depend a lot on the vicissitudes of nature but the over-all picture is very bright. As I pointed out, however, the over-all increase was about 12 per cent in 1960. This is due in large part to the program of the government and I think we should remind ourselves of this program and discuss it—possibly by criticizing it in a constructive and practical way—so that we can improve it.

I was very interested in the remarks of the hon. member for Peace River who referred to certain observations that the hon. member for Jasper-Edson had made about cash advances. This was one of the first pieces of legislation enacted by the government and in making a survey of my riding last fall I found that the farmers in that part of Saskatchewan had utilized this legislation very effectively. In fact, rural municipal secretaries and elevator agents who are involved in handling this type of payment told me that about twice as many farmers were availing themselves of this legislation, and from talking to municipal secretaries I learned that tax collections were considerably above those of preceding years. I questioned them about the reasons for this and they gave the credit to the cash advances legislation, so that this is one of the most effective and practical pieces of legislation that the government has implemented.

The hon. member for Peace River referred to the farm credit corporation, as did the hon. member for Middlesex East. This has been a most effective piece of legislation and it has been widely utilized by farmers all over the west. Because of the changes that are taking place there was need for a more flexible credit program in order to help to develop more economic farming units.

I should like to associate myself with the remarks made this afternoon by the hon. member for Middlesex West. I feel consideration should be given to a reduction in the cost of the initial application for an appraisal. The charge at the moment is \$50, and the former assessment was \$10, which I believe was too small. I believe we would have a flood of applications to be handled by an already overworked department if the charge made were too small. In my opinion a more realistic price to charge for the initial application would be \$25, and in this way we would