

*Farm Prices*

with the standard of living of the other groups in this country in order that agriculture may be able to purchase its just share of this country's tremendous production.

As I view the bill now before us it is a scientific measure designed to meet our immediate post-war problems in agriculture. I should like to see it continued as a permanent measure to assure parity to agriculture. Agriculture is quite content to share depression years and prosperous years with other groups in this country, but I do not think it is fair that agriculture should be asked to bear the most serious part of a depression when it comes and then not participate fairly in the prosperous years. We all agree that the problem is there. My suggestion is that we should use the material which we have available to determine just what that problem is. We should compute the proper share of the national income which agriculture should receive annually and then we should set about in a scientific way to see that agriculture does receive annually its fair share of the national income.

As we move toward the end of this war and as we look forward to the post-war period we have not hesitated to profit by the lessons which the war has taught us in other regards. The measure which was passed by this house yesterday to provide for family allowances is to me one of the most heartening things that we have done. In that instance we have not hesitated to profit by the lessons of the past years and to look forward to the future with courage and initiative. We have not hesitated to bring forward an instrument which we hope will bring about the results that we desire. I should like to urge that we use the same courage and initiative in regard to the restoration of agriculture in this country to its proper position with respect to the income of the other groups. I shall go farther and say if agriculture should be restored to that position it would employ at least five hundred thousand of the men from the armed forces and of the men and women now in war-time employment who will be seeking employment when the war is over. Do not think for a moment that the farmer does without a hired man because he wants to. A man carrying on mixed farming in Ontario without the help of a hired man is, as I said a few minutes ago, living a life of drudgery. It is a seven-day week job three hundred and sixty-five days of the year. Just as soon as the Canadian farmer has sufficient income with which to employ a hired man he is going to have one. Some hon. members ask me how he would keep him.

[Mr. Cleaver.]

Well, I have a suggestion to make in that regard. I think that every hundred-acre farm in this province—

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): How would he keep him home on Sundays to do the milking?

Mr. CLEAVER: Well, I think the present system, where the odd farmer has a hired man, is a fair one. The hired man is home one Sunday and the farmer is home the next Sunday. They alternate. My suggestion is this. Every farm in Ontario should have a second house on it just as good as the one that is now there. In the early years of married life while the children are young that house could be occupied by the hired man. There would be no difficulty in getting the proper type of hired man on the farm if his wife and family had a good house in which to live. Then as the children grow up and the eldest boy marries he wants a home of his own. That son of the farmer will then live in the second house. I can look back forty years. I well remember forty years ago that wheat and other grains sold at practically the same price as wheat and other grains were bringing in 1939. There has been no substantial change in the selling price of grain in that forty years. But look at the cost of hired help; it has gone up at least three hundred per cent. Look at the cost of farm implements and the cost of everything that the farmer has to buy. All these things have at least doubled and in many instances trebled. The return to the farmer from his basic products has not improved to anything like the same extent. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I urge that we scientifically determine the proper share of the national income that agriculture should receive, and then by way of subsidy, floor prices or in some other way, we should assure to agriculture annually just that amount.

A word in regard to export trade. I have had the thought advanced to me by farmers in my riding many times that in the past we have made mistakes. We have exported grain to other countries at less than the cost of production here, and in that way have permitted other countries to produce finished food products such as bacon to be sold in competition with our own bacon in the markets of the world. My farmers do not approve of that; they think that in future as far as may be humanly possible Canada should export only finished products such as flour, pork, beef, cheese and the like.

I have one word to say to our Minister of Agriculture before closing. When war came in 1939 it was only natural that farmers