

their production. There are many examples of the same sort of thing in the Prairie provinces. Just who is the small farmer?

Mr. Horner: The backbone of the nation.

Mr. Burton: Often he is an older man who still has some years left of his working life. Farming is the skill that he possesses, it is his life, he likes it and wants to continue in it for the remainder of his working life. Many of these farmers have a very useful contribution to make to the economy and to society. Some of them know that for one reason or another they will not have a son to carry on, but nevertheless this is the life they want and they can make a useful contribution to society by continuing to farm with a reasonable degree of assistance.

● (8:40 p.m.)

I received a letter today from a small farmer north of Regina who points out some of the problems he faces. He points out that he has written to Premier Thatcher, a good friend of the Minister of Manpower and Immigration (Mr. Lang). I am sure the minister knows him very well and I expect he will go along with these remarks since they are political colleagues and get along very well together. This farmer wrote to Premier Thatcher and asked, "What shall I do? I simply cannot make a decent or adequate living under present circumstances and policies." Premier Thatcher replied, "Diversify." The farmer said, "I am 58 years old. I have had a heart condition for the past year. I cannot go into livestock at this stage of life. I should like to carry on my farming operation for the remainder of my working life." That reply is the type of nonsense we are hearing in response to some of the difficulties which are brought to the attention of public officials.

We want to know what the minister intends to do about the problems of small farmers. It has been pointed out that there are to be adjustment programs. That is good and fine. If we can implement some adjustment programs, they will help. There may be farmers on small or uneconomic farms who want to retire. If that is their wish, help ought to be provided to enable them realize their wish. Some of them may want to continue their farming operations, and they can make good, useful contributions to our society. I suggest that we must be humane as well as making good economic sense or making dollars and cents sense, or nonsense in some cases.

I want to hear what the minister will do to replace this feature of grain marketing policy. Is he going to do something by way of income policy, price policy or production policies that will be of help to the small farmer, the man who faces a special set of problems? The minister ought to be well acquainted with these problems and he should show a greater degree of responsiveness than he has up to the present with respect to the problems faced by these people.

The feature of the legislation having to do with the elimination of the unit quota, in the absence of any acceptable or suitable alternative means and scars an

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otherwise acceptable and useful overhaul of the act. I again remind the minister that we want to hear from him. What is his course of action? In which direction is he moving? Is he in the process of phasing-out the cash advances system, or is it still considered an integral and essential feature of marketing policy? Mr. Speaker, you can kill legislation by squeezing it out as well as by repealing it. I urge the minister not to underrate the importance of cash advances in the grain marketing system, because they are an essential component of that system.

The Liberal party, of course, historically has displayed a lack of understanding of the value of cash advances. I recall that years ago—I wonder if the minister recalls this—the then Liberal government resisted all attempts to introduce cash advances. It was not until they were turned out of office that cash advances legislation was introduced. Of course, the Liberal government has been riding along on the coat-tails of that legislation for some years since. We now wonder what is its future. Does the government plan to continue it on a long-term basis? Will it continue to be a permanent feature of grain marketing policy?

That pretty well sums up the comments that I wanted to make on this bill. I am looking forward to the minister's response to the proposals and problems which I have raised. I hope he will acknowledge that we have pointed to a number of features of the bill which are acceptable and useful. The minister is rather hard put sometimes to get his point across in western Canada. I ought to know, because today an interesting copy of the *Hi-Way 15 Gazette* dated April 29 came across my desk. That is a newspaper published in Semans, Saskatchewan.

Mr. Lang: It is an annual.

Mr. Burton: It is a weekly newspaper. That remark shows how much the minister is out of touch. I usually write a column in this weekly newspaper because it covers part of my constituency. Occasionally the minister horns in as well. Sometimes he sends out a little column which is printed in some weekly newspapers in Saskatchewan and, probably, in those beyond the Saskatchewan border.

Mr. Benjamin: It is a column which he does not write.

Mr. Burton: I looked at the column headed, "Ottawa Report" in the copy of the *Hi-Way 15 Gazette* which came across my desk this afternoon. I like to look at my column and check it, and I was amazed to see, "Ottawa Report, by John Burton, MP, Regina East Constituency". It began as follows:

I have now introduced into the House of Commons a bill to amend the cash advance legislation. This is one more step in the total overhaul of grains legislation and policy—

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. May I ask the hon. member if he had the consent of the Governor General to do this?

Mr. Burton: Mr. Speaker, I was very much concerned about the matter because I have been tutored on proce-