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industry of Canada, with the result that we have had one of the most chaotic situations. One result has been that there has been no long-term progressive policy for any particular group in agriculture.

I shall reflect on some of the things that have happened in our area. The federal government has brought in a policy to promote the re-establishment of the Ontario sugar beet industry. This is laudible. We need alternative crops to some of the other crops which no longer are feasible to produce. However, when we think back to the year 1968, we remember that the government at that time was trying so hard to get the farmers engaged in the sugar beet industry out of that industry. They pleaded with them not to produce, and asked the sugar refinery of that area to purchase the equipment from the farmers in order that the equipment would not be a liability. In other words, the industry was defunct. Now this government plans to invest millions of dollars to re-establish a new industry. This is not as devious as it sounds because in that era, 1962 through 1966, the actual economic returns to the growers of sugar beets were not comparable to the returns in respect of other companion crops, so the farmers in that area turned from the production of sugar beets to crops which could be harvested with greater facility or with a greater return per acre.

At that time the industry was not assisted. Now, when the world price for sugar is higher and there could be a measure of profit in the production of sugar beets, the government has the idea that perhaps we should have an industry down in that area. If a farmer wishes to become involved in the production of sugar beets his costs are immense. No farmer will become involved in this type of investment unless he has a long-term guarantee of some sort that he will have a domestic market for the product at a profit to him. No longer will he abide by the catch-as-catch-can promotion of a crop which is on again and off again. He wants to see a long-term program with some stability. We certainly have not had such a program from this government.

Every time an election comes along it seems to be a golden year for the producer in Canada. Prior to the 1968 election in my area, one million dollars was given to the sugar beet farmers. Prior to the last election there were payments to the wheat growers, the hog producers and other growers in different areas. It just happened that these promotions took place and that payments were made some weeks prior to the calling of the election in order to influence some of the farmers in their thinking. This, however, creates havoc in respect of the commodity groups.

We have established a special committee to study the high prices of food in this country, but let us look at the record of what has happened in the last three years. We are importing butter into this country. Four or five years ago we had tremendous surpluses of stocks, but the government set up a national dairy committee to look after this, to reduce the surplus stocks. They did this to such a degree that they reduced a great many of our producers to poverty and they had to move off the farms. They regulated production to a sufficient degree to meet domestic requirements, they hoped, but when an invariable factor such as bad weather upset the whole proposi-

[Mr. Danforth.]

tion, the government has had to make the decision to import dairy products into Canada. We cannot import these at a low, basic price; we have to import them at the world market price which is very often greater than the prices charged here in Canada.

• (1650)

Let me say a few words about other commodities. I can recall the time last spring when in my area there was tremendous frost damage which, in most instances, completely wiped out the entire crop of the peach growers. Some of the growers suffered grievously. They suffered a crop loss of perhaps \$10,000 to \$100,000. They appealed to this government for some help. They wanted direct financial aid, but the government procrastinated. What the government said was what we will do is wait until we see what kind of harvest you have, and then we will act accordingly. The peach growers in the area knew there was not going to be any harvest and that the government was not going to take any action, which is what the government ended up by doing. The government said they would back the farmers at the bank for loans at current rates of interest. Most of those growers who had any credit at all could have taken the same action, which perhaps they did. This is what the government did in this instance.

The government does not have a constant policy. When the hog producers were in trouble a year ago and asked for some help, they got it immediately. They received \$5 per pig up to 200 pigs, which gave them \$1,000 a farm. Those farmers were helped, and justifiably so, but the same help was not given to other producers. Why do we help one group and not another group? Why is it that when the consumers of Canada are paying the highest price for milk, we fine producers for producing milk? There is something wrong with the system and with the over-all policy. The minister said this morning—and I agree with him—that there is a farmer leaving a farm every two hours, or eleven farmers leaving farms every 24 hours and going to the city where, in some instances, they become welfare recipients. There is something wrong when we lose farmers at that rate.

Do you know, that at present we have more civil servants in Canada than there are farmers in the country? There is something wrong when we cannot support an industry but yet can support a bureaucracy. We must have a policy which will put incentive back into farming. Farming is no longer a has-been industry. It is a very specialized industry which requires extremely long-term financing and capital financing which is comparable to industrial financing. We are not dealing with farmers whose outlays run from \$15,000 to \$25,000, although certainly there are some of those today who run very successful farms. But in most cases we are dealing with farmers with investments anywhere from \$150,000 to one million dollars or perhaps \$1.5 million. These are large farming interests. Do not tell me that they are corporate farms. Some of them are family farms according to any criteria you want to apply. They are the people who are getting hurt. They want to know what the government's policies are, where we are going and what we are doing.

Just to add to the confusion that we are experiencing today, we heard testimony from two key ministers of the