

Agricultural Policies

those very same farmers are being penalized through Operation Lift. I say that because of the ignorant ruling which stipulates that July 15 is the cut-off date so far as summerfallow and forage is concerned. That ignorant ruling ought to be altered in so far as it applies to western Canada, because that is where most of our grain is grown.

The House is also considering Bill C-196, which we are told is to overhaul the grain marketing procedure. The committee was asked whether we had studied grain marketing in the United States. We said we had not yet done so but that we would. One of the elevator company representatives then said that we should only bring in a new grain marketing act after we have studied what a number of other grain marketing agencies elsewhere have been doing. The Minister without Portfolio (Mr. Lang) said that the government is setting up an extensive study program to find ways of modernizing the whole grain marketing and handling system. What are other countries doing in this respect? In his report for the Economic Council of Canada, published in January, 1970, Mr. Hudson has this to say at page 109:

Australia

Wheat Production and Disposition—The area in wheat in Australia increased every year except one since 1956 to reach a record of 10.5 million hectares in 1968—

That gives you some idea of what some of our competitors are doing, yet we have fallen behind. Between 1950 and 1954 we had something like 32 per cent of the international wheat market. In 1968, our percentage of that market had fallen to 17 per cent. We are not selling. We have agreed in the last few years not to sell, and this government will not agree to make sales in the future, because it has adopted a negative, hopeless attitude. This is what the report says at page 114 about the United States:

Wheat Production and Disposition—The area planted to wheat in the United States in 1967 was 23.9 million hectares (50 million acres), the largest since 1953, and 18 per cent higher than 1966 and the five-year averages for 1959/1963—

At page 122 of the report this is said about France:

As a result of high price supports, production has increased irregularly from an average of 9.4 million metric tons for the 1954/1958 period to 14.3 million tons in 1967... About 80 per cent of shipments of wheat out of France are to non-EEC destinations.

That gives us some idea of what our competitors are doing. The report says that the

[Mr. Horner.]

Argentina as well has markedly increased its wheat acreage.

I wholeheartedly support the thinking behind the motion we are considering, because it urges the government to take positive measures to ensure a dynamic rural community as an essential component of Canadian society. We are told that Bill C-196 will bring about a re-organization of our system of grain marketing. It seems to me that we are re-organizing our system before having studied how such systems work elsewhere. It is like putting the cart before the horse, and indicates negative thinking of the government. It cannot go quickly enough to wreck the agriculture of this country.

Mr. Olson: We are going too fast for the opposition.

Mr. Horner: At page 1 of the brief presented to the committee by the North-West Line Elevators Association and Pacific Elevators Limited, we find this:

R. J. Shepp, special advisor to the Grains Group attached to the Honourable Otto Lang, Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board envisaged in Winnipeg just a few weeks ago that the country elevator system will consist of only 20 to 40 country elevators—

This statement indicates why the people across the prairies ought to be concerned. The government has failed to take positive steps to ensure that there is a dynamic rural community as an essential component of Canadian society. The Minister without Portfolio had this to say about our grain handling system. I am about to read from a newspaper clipping:

● (2:40 p.m.)

“—the West is characterized by a profusion of small elevators located on closely-spaced railway branch lines,” ..substantial improvements could be made that would both reduce the costs of handling and transporting the products and shorten the reaction time of the system in moving grain—

That is, if this whole system could be reorganized. There is concern all across the country. On page 5, the brief to which I referred earlier reads:

The licencing powers of the Commission are so broad that the industry feels that the Commission can make arbitrary decisions by way of licence to control the location of elevators and thereby affect the efficiency of the grain handling system and the very destiny of Western Canadian towns.

I might say that one minister has been very closely connected with those who presented this brief. He does not want Bill C-196 to be