

*Farm Income*

averaging trust accounts were indeed feasible and, if implemented, would help stabilize the rural economy and the prices of farm supplies.

As everyone realizes, there are cycles in the agricultural commodity phases. A farmer in a high cycle would be able to put part of his income in a tax-free account and withdraw that money when his net income was low. It could be further expanded to allow—as in the western grain stabilization fund—for fluctuations of government money at a time when the whole region is in a low income position.

Taxation and stabilization methods can do only part of the job. At present we are lagging behind the United States in agricultural productivity. Some of our traditional export markets for farm products are being eroded. It seems to me that one of the major reasons for this sluggishness is in the federal government's almost exclusive emphasis on price stability as achieved through supply management schemes. What we are suggesting is that the government place more emphasis on the marketing end of the marketing board and much less emphasis on the supply end of the supply management board.

Surely as everyone realizes, farmers like to produce everything that they are capable of producing; but when told that they have to live under quotas and that their input costs are guaranteed, a percentage of them could become sluggish and inefficient in their operations. We are stating that the Department of Agriculture should have a policy in marketing boards emphasizing the marketing end and de-emphasizing the supply management end of it. As well, it should increase the number—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ethier):** Order, please. I regret to interrupt the hon. gentleman, but I have to inform him that his allotted time has expired. Nevertheless, he may continue if there is unanimous consent.

**Some hon. Members:** Agreed.

**Mr. Schellenberger:** Mr. Speaker, I thank hon. members. I will be very brief because others of my colleagues would like to address the House on this matter.

The last area that I would like to cover very quickly is renewable energy, and this goes along with the research end of the department. I think it is imperative that one of the areas that farmers can save money in terms of their input costs is in the field of energy. The department should be encouraging by way of research areas of renewable energy such as biomass and solar energy. This is an area I would like to see emphasized as much as possible in the future.

We have put forward an excellent motion. We have extended to the minister five areas which he should consider so as to increase the net income of farmers across this country. I urge the members of this House to support this motion.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Adrien Lambert (Bellechasse):** Mr. Speaker, I am particularly pleased that the official opposition has chosen such an important matter as agriculture to conclude this

[Mr. Schellenberger.]

important series of opposition days before Easter. I hope this Lenten period will be beneficial to all Canadian farmers, not only in Quebec but throughout Canada.

Agriculture is the most important industry, since it provides every human being with the necessary food to ensure his survival. One may be educated, have all kinds of degrees and great knowledge, but the fact is that a man must feed himself each day to recuperate and start again the next day. And it is with food coming from the agricultural sector that most human beings can recuperate from day to day. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, farming is the most important profession on earth, but unfortunately that sector has found and is still finding it very difficult to have its rights recognized, to obtain a fair income equivalent to that of workers in other sectors of economic activity.

Mr. Speaker, I remember having to go one day to a specialist in a hospital. Of course, those people who dispense their science to the sick have the right to be paid for their services. That is absolutely normal. I asked him for a bill. In those days, there was no hospital insurance, and you had to pay your own hospital expenses so I said to my specialist: For the love of God, let me have a bill and I will pay you. He pulled out of his drawer, a book containing a list of fees.

So, I told my good friend to spare himself the trouble of reading the list, or even of showing it to me because I was unable, at that time to show him my own book with the list of the rates I could charge those who availed themselves of my services: I had no such book. So then, I said to my specialist: "make me out a bill so I can pay you." He insisted on telling me what his fee was. On hearing it, I understood that at the going rate, some years ago, even at \$2 an hour, it would take me 250 hours of work to pay him for his own four hours of work. As we both had the same number of hours in a day, and in a year, I told him: "I shall have to live to a ripe old age to be able to pay you, and if the other professionals with whom I deal charge the same rate, I shall never live long enough to pay all of you."

But he understood that the work of the farmer is just as important as that of any other person, in any other profession, because I had said to him: "Your work is essential because you repair bodies; but, on the other hand, I feel that my work is also just as important because the bodies that you heal, before they become ill, I have to feed them."

So, Mr. Speaker, I feel it is good that we should pause a moment today to think upon the part the farmer plays in our society. The farming community, Mr. Speaker, have rights, and I wholeheartedly agree that in the past few years we have progressed tremendously far. I recall, Mr. Speaker, that in hard times, during the depression, from 1930 to 1940, many farmers had incurred indebtedness after the first world war, during the inflation years, when people were buying land at extremely high prices and when farm products were selling at very good prices.