

Wheat Export Prices

problem of the farmer is felt by many other industries across Canada. I continue quoting:

It is ironic that in a world where millions daily suffer the pangs of hunger and thousands daily die of malnutrition, the abundance of Canadian agriculture should prove to be an embarrassment to the nation and before the world.

That statement summarizes pretty well our present situation and narrows our focus to the point of the problem confronting us. Really, there is no farm problem, because markets could be found. There are hungry people all over the world and we should be trying to feed them. Therefore, what we are discussing is basically a national policy. We are considering this government's policy towards the international grain market, as well as towards agriculture in our country as a whole.

There are three basic questions we must ask ourselves. First, what is the situation in western Canada today? Second, is the government aware of the situation on the prairies? Third, what are the solutions? During the next few minutes I hope to mention a number of things which may help. I hope my suggestions will enlighten hon. members about the current situation in western Canada. The situation, and I mean this sincerely, is very, very grim. As a matter of fact, in many prairie areas today it is disastrous. Tens of thousands of prairie farmers are facing bankruptcy. Many have already gone bankrupt; many others are being forced to leave the land and go to the cities. One could go on talking about the many problems these people will face once they get to the cities. Many of these people have no skills and will become the new urban unemployed and the urban poor.

One can see readily that many farmers are broke. I met many such farmers when I was in Saskatchewan a few days ago, for the week end. When farmers go to banks for loans or loan extensions, they discover interest rates have gone up, and this situation has led to a vicious circle. Many farmers cannot afford machinery. Many are having their machinery repossessed. The hon. member for Saskatoon-Biggar (Mr. Gleave) was telling me about some farmers he met at a week-end picnic; many of them did not know where they would get money to meet their next payment on farm machinery. The effects of their plight radiate out in circles. Not only is the farmer of western Canada being affected by the situation, the small businessman also is suffering—although our teachers are not suffering quite so much. The suppliers of farm machinery and owners of small businesses in small towns such as Yorkton, Melville,

Kamsack and Kenora are suffering. They are suffering because there is not any money around. We need more money in the western economy, otherwise there is going to be a national disaster in the very near future. On June 10 of this year, 55 per cent of the delivery points in Saskatchewan were on a three-bushel quota or less. A year ago, in 1968, not one was on a three-bushel quota or less. Also, in comparison, on June 10 of this year there were no points in the west that were on the six-bushel quota. A year ago some 35 per cent of the delivery points were on the six-bushel quota. I think this is another illustration of the situation as it exists.

• (11:40 p.m.)

In addition to this, the farmer is caught in the cost-price squeeze. The cost to produce a bushel of wheat has gone up and the farmer's income has gone down, in many cases drastically. We are appealing to the government to save an industry. Many members have talked about subsidies today. Western farmers get angry when members talk about subsidies. They say, why does the federal government subsidize General Motors and the Ford Motor Company to the tune of \$80 million a year? Why are *Time Magazine* and *Reader's Digest* receiving subsidies? Why are gold mines receiving subsidies when farmers are not even getting an even break in our society? Farmers are not going to put up with this kind of nonsense any longer.

We saw what happened out west last week. I say this is only the beginning unless the government institutions make some radical changes at this time. Farmers are organizing in order to protect themselves. Almost every other sector of our economy is organized today, whether it is labour or business.

I wish to quote from page 2 of the farm union brief I was quoting a few moments ago:

It is the goal of the National Farmers Union to organize farmers from sea to sea in Canada into an organization of farmers and for farmers. We believe we must face the realities of the times, that farm problems are primarily national and international in nature, and that the problems which farmers face across Canada must be rationalized by farmers at the national level in an organization that can, in fact, be an important forum in participatory democracy.

I endorse the actions of the western farmers and I encourage them to get together and organize. It is very sad that all too often governments only react to what is happening in the community. A government will only go as far as it is forced. If the government does