

Wheat Acreage Reduction

three Prairie provinces before introducing this half-baked plan.

Mr. Speaker, before this plan can become successfully effective, the government will have to give many more answers and make many changes.

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton-Melville): Mr. Speaker, I promise to be brief because I know that if my colleagues in the House are as tired as I am, brevity will be about the best thing I can produce at this time. I support the motion introduced by the hon. member for Saskatoon-Biggar (Mr. Gleave) this afternoon and agree with a number of things that were said about the details of the legislation introduced in the House last Friday, things said not only by the hon. member for Saskatoon-Biggar but by the hon. member for Battleford-Kindersley (Mr. Thomson) and several others. That is one of the handicaps in participating in the debate at this time of night, Mr. Speaker.

There is one thing I really do want to stress, however, and this is as a result of a number of phone calls that I have received, one as late as ten o'clock tonight, stressing the disillusionment and disappointment of many people with small farms in my constituency in regard to the announcement of Friday last regarding the reduction of wheat lands by 22 million or 24 million acres. This is going to affect many smaller farmers in a negative way, the farmer on the half or three-quarter section with 200 or 300 acres of cultivated land. It will not help them very much at all and many will be worse off than before because they depended on the unit quota to pay immediate expenses in the fall. In many areas of my constituency there are small farms where people are going to feel the pinch when they find next year that they do not have the opportunity to deliver 400 bushels of wheat in a unit quota.

This is something we must emphasize to the government as members of political parties, that we must give the opportunity to the smaller farmers as well as the larger ones with units of 1,000 or 1,500 acres. The small family farm still has a place in Canadian society, a place in western Canada, and I think this could be just another way of speeding the day when the small farmer is forced off the land. I should hate to see this happen, Mr. Speaker.

In many ways this plan is nothing but a teaser to the farmers. They are being provid-

ed with \$6 or \$10 an acre to take their land out of wheat production. This is barely enough to cover the cost of summer fallow. On top of this the farmer has to make a living and has to meet his expenses from last year and provide for the year ahead.

People in my constituency have been waiting for a long time and with anticipation for an announcement from this government and I know many of them are disappointed in the announcement of last Friday. It was a unique announcement in many ways. It was an admission by the government that they had failed in their marketing policies and that the government did not really have a solution. The only solution they offered, to take wheat land out of production, is a great insult to many farmers. It is also a great contradiction when we think that more than half the people of the world are either hungry or dying of starvation while we in western Canada have a surplus of grain.

● (12 midnight)

We have the capacity to produce even more grain, but we cannot sell it. Food is one of the greatest tools for peace there is. Hungry people in the world will rebel, no matter where they live or under what political system they live. That is what I must stress again and again, because it is something the government has forgotten as it goes about governing the country day to day. There are many contributions we can make in the nation and the world, and we must introduce vast changes in our way of doing things pretty soon, not only for our own sake but for the sake of the people of the world.

The hon. member for York West (Mr. Givens) has been undertaking interesting activities and making interesting statements. In one of his statements he said that we spend more time in this House talking about agriculture than about any other subject. Perhaps he is right. We spend a great deal of time talking about agriculture, but is it not ironic that the more we talk about it, the less seems to be done about it? The government never takes our hints and never seems to listen to us. Some say that Parliament is becoming more and more irrelevant. Perhaps that is true, perhaps we should not be talking in this debate.

Are we doing any good here and accomplishing anything? I ask myself this question more and more as every month goes by. Perhaps we are just sitting here and playing