

*Supply—Agriculture*

I have on hand many letters from farmers telling me about their problems. I do not want to mention specific cases and names, but should the minister wish to read those letters, I would willingly make them available to him, at his convenience. For instance, one farmer wrote me that he had made an application to attend a retraining course, in order to further his knowledge in agriculture, but that it had been rejected. As he does not want to live on social welfare, he writes: "I do not want to live on public assistance. I do not want unemployment insurance. What I want is to earn a living by my own work. I want to be useful to my family and to society." And he adds: "If I am not allowed to take courses by which I could try and earn some money this winter, I shall have to sell some of my milch-cows and, in the spring, my situation will be worse than in the fall."

Mr. Chairman, I am mentioning this case to prove how painful is the plight of some farmers, who are doing their best to be efficient and play their part in our Canadian society.

This leads me to say that we need reforms, because our present economic system is in a bad shape. It must be reformed by orderly men, by people willing to work seriously with a view to establishing order and social justice, so as to make it possible, for those who have enough courage, to work and earn their living, thereby contributing to the development of their own country. Otherwise, the present economic system will, in my opinion, be transformed and destroyed by agitators like those we hear about every day. In fact, we are witnessing protests, rebellion against authority. There is a feeling of unrest and we should not take advantage of that to stir up passions. On the contrary, this should arouse due reflexion on our part, so as to make us assume seriously our responsibilities in order to bring about necessary reforms before it is too late.

Mr. Chairman, in concluding my observations, I express the hope that my remarks will help to solve those serious problems.

[English]

Mr. Pringle: I shall be very brief, Mr. Chairman, in my short dissertation. As a new member I should like to say that I have listened with a great deal of interest to the more experienced farmer members. While I have been here I have learned a great deal about the problems of farming and of the farmers. This is most interesting to me because I have

[Mr. Lambert (Bellechasse).]

spent my entire life engaged in farming or the industries related to farming. I am concerned about all the statements that have been made concerning the family farm. It has been suggested that the family farm is disappearing, that it is going down the drain. It has also been suggested that by some magic formula the reason for this is government action or inaction. I have been working with family farms for a good many years and I submit that the family farms are not going down the drain.

There are many family farms across Canada. In my constituency in British Columbia I would say that 90 per cent of the farms are family farms. What has disappeared is the old concept of the chicken on the manure pile type of farm where there were a few chickens, a pig or two, a cow in the barn and a horse to pull the plow. This is disappearing and will continue to disappear because the farmers of Canada are not the discredited people that some of the farmer members here suggest they are when they tell us of the terrible plight they are in. Their plight is not all that bad. If the farmers whom I know were sitting in the gallery today, I do not think they would approve of everybody standing up and saying that we must give them this and that because they just have to have it. We are pressuring the farmers. We are telling them how to farm and how to run their businesses.

The point I should like to make, is this: I wish people would forget about this business of the government should do this and the government should do that. No matter what the government has done, is doing or will do at some other time, I should like someone to state what the reasons for the problems of the farmers are and enumerate them, because there are reasons. I cannot remember doing business in Canada when there was not a surplus of every kind of farm product. We have been promoting and encouraging farmers to produce in surplus. This is a way of life. They have been producing to the benefit of the secondary industries. Do not blame the secondary industries for that. From childhood on we are told to buy as low as we can, according to the market and to sell for as much as we can according to the market. This is the way business is done. If we over-produce we are in trouble. I thank the divine person who put the bug in somebody's ear that there should be a marketing board for grain because I would hate to think what would have happened over the years if the