

Supply—Agriculture

inequities that have resulted from Liberal shortcomings we would have neither the time nor the money to build the sound national policies that those engaged in agriculture request and need for the future.

Last month a delegation of people from the prairie provinces presented a brief requesting deficiency payments on wheat, oats and barley for the past three crop years. Their spokesmen, and members of that delegation, rejected the acreage payment plan. However, correspondence from my constituency indicates that there are many people who really believe the acreage plan to have been a good one. Most of these people point out, however, that \$200 does not equal the losses they feel they have been taking in producing grain.

I attended the annual meeting of the farmers' union in Saskatchewan last fall, and after listening to the deliberations I came away with the conclusion that this organization appreciated the benefits of the acreage payment plan. The efforts of this government to stabilize wheat production in those areas must not be forgotten. The long range plans of the government, including credit legislation, crop insurance, and trade and marketing programs, together with the benefits available under the stabilization act, should all contribute to a speedy transition from a straight grain economy to a more stable, diversified farm program in many parts of the prairies.

To assist in this process I believe the acreage payment plan has proven to be worthy of being continued. There is room for some improvements, gained from the experience of last year. There should be a floor on the amount paid to farmers with very small acreage, and this is a fair request when one considers that there is also a ceiling on the amount which can be received. I would also suggest that a payment based on a farm of average size should raise the maximum payment above the \$200 level of last year.

This action alone cannot satisfy the legitimate demands of grain growers who see livestock producers and producers of other commodities protected by the umbrella of the farm price stabilization legislation. Grain growers in the wheat board area are the only Canadian producers excluded from these benefits. They remember the Prime Minister during the election campaign as he went about championing the elimination of the inequities that might exist, or come to exist, as between one segment of the economy and another.

I am one who believes that this government has sought to follow this through in
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the legislation it has brought before parliament. Indeed, I believe that for the first time in the history of this country western members of parliament were willing and able to support the measures taken during the last session designed to assure Canadian labour and Canadian industry of the Canadian market in so far as it required their production. On that same premise, people in the grain growing areas look for an equal measure of protection in the domestic market with regard to their sales of wheat to Canadian consumers. And while it might be argued that a two price system for wheat sold on the domestic market might be inequitable to the producers of oats and barley, I am satisfied that the grain growers in the Rosthern constituency, the grain growers of Saskatchewan and the grain growers in all western Canada would accept it as an act of good faith on the part of the government.

Then there is the matter of the subsidy on the export of flour, which is presently being absorbed by the Canadian wheat board and deducted from the final returns to producers of wheat. Surely there is no need for argument against a situation such as this continuing. Of course these measures would not have been necessary had wheat, oats and barley been placed under the stabilization legislation in 1957. Those who ask for deficiency payments still want these grains dealt with separately, and on the face of it these producers have every moral right to request these deficiency payments under the stabilization act. I was one of those who questioned their stand in asking that wheat, oats and barley be excluded. However, in the light of experience I am convinced that the government was thus given the leeway necessary to make the consideration of acreage payments possible and to make possible the two price system for wheat consumed in Canada.

When the farm delegation was recently in Ottawa, Jack Wesson, president of the Saskatchewan wheat pool, presented the brief outlining the economic problem, and he was followed by a number of people who outlined the social problem in the grain growing areas. It seemed to me that they gave the answer, and what must be the answer of any responsible government.

For the greater part of the last 12 years, the last eight of those years, anyway, grain was the only commodity in Canada which had the benefit of a stable price, namely an initial price and the final price paid through the pool formed under the Canadian wheat board. If we were so bold as to grant the requests put forward in the western brief it would only add fuel to the fires which have