

the applications in many instances came from men who found they had got on the wrong side of the bargain and wanted the government to assume the load instead of themselves. They came almost daily instead of weekly, but we had no power to grant any of their applications and we did not. The minister suggested he had the power. I do not know under what power he could do it. I know there are cases of hardship, but it is sometimes better to stand by a sane and sensible rule than to vary it under special circumstances, creating a precedent that is going to be very serious.

Mr. MORRISON: The conditions in which those farmers largely find themselves are due to a reaction from war conditions. When war was declared the cry went out, "Produce, produce, produce", and the farmers got busy and assumed extra contracts, bought more land, and more equipment, dug right in, and produced beyond their means. Now no readjustment was made in their favour to enable them to successfully and permanently carry on. On the contrary, adjustments were made with the railways. The Crowsnest pass rates were set aside and they were allowed to raise the rates against the farmers who were urged to produce in the national interest. The banks had the laws adjusted to give them greater advantages, in the national interest, presumably, but it was in the banks' interest really. The Riordon people had a readjustment of their affairs, and they settled their tax account by the note route, which was an absolutely new process. Was that not readjustment in the interest of the individual or the company? As regards the manufacturers of Canada, the tariff was raised on farm implements by just seven per cent as a war measure, against those farmers who were urged to produce in the national interest. While we were producing, the other fellow was getting a good slice of it.

Mr. MEIGHEN: Is the hon. member talking by the book in that? If he will look back over the law, he will find that a special exception was made in the case of the farmer and that there was no increase on farm implements at all.

Mr. MORRISON: There was no increase in the tariff on farm implements? Well, there was an increased duty on a number of commodities in the interest of the manufacturers. Many of us, as individuals, found ourselves in this position, that we were obliged in our mutual interest to compromise. It was no use putting a man down and out, when his trouble

was largely through no fault of his own, and he had assumed too heavy obligations. There are a number of members in this corner of the House who, I know, compromised with others, rather than put them down and out. This is a very proper step for the government to take. It is not giving any favours: It is a readjustment of conditions that were brought about largely from the reaction after the war, and I heartily commend the government for the step they are taking.

Mr. GOULD: The speculator is not as great a factor in western Canada to-day as he was some years ago. First of all, agriculture is not profitable enough for him to look upon the purchase of land as an investment. Second, provincial legislation has taken hold of the speculator and practically eliminated him from his activities in the west simply because he was a nuisance in the early days and an imposition upon those who were trying to settle on the land. I speak now of our own province. With our wild lands tax the imposition of the telephone tax, and various other forms of good legislation, we have largely eliminated this individual, and I do not think the day is going to come when he will again be a big factor in the purchase of raw lands in western Canada. Consequently, if we are going to look after the few people we have left in that western country at the present time, legislation such as this is necessary. I say the few we have, because they have been diminished in numbers in the last few years largely because of the speculative activities of the past. Personally, I know of thousands and thousands of acres that were abandoned by speculators who came in from the United States, simply because they would not keep up the payments. That is, agriculture was not profitable enough that people resident in certain areas could purchase these lands at the enhanced price, and this fact, together with the taxes that were being levied, such as the telephone tax, wild lands tax and various other taxes of the provincial government, practically obliged those men either to cultivate the land or to abandon it altogether. We approved the legislation in those days because the speculator came in, and I think we would approve it again to-day if we had to review the matter.

Sir HENRY DRAYTON: I should like to meet the views of hon. gentlemen to my left, except the hon. member for Weyburn (Mr. Morrison), because he approaches the question from an entirely different angle, an angle which has nothing to do with the case. I have a great deal of sympathy with what has been