

Agreements Respecting Marginal Lands

taking direct measures to relieve the position of the very low income farmers who have a variety of reasons for little hope, unassisted, of escaping from their present depressed economic position?

What does he say about the proposal to help the diminishing number of farmers who remain in agriculture to use their land to the best possible advantage and increase their income earning potential? What does he say about the recommendations made by the Canadian Federation of Agriculture which are to be found in their brief of March 21, 1957, at page 2? What does the minister say about the various statements of the problem beginning at page 3 and extending right on to page 5, numbering seven?

What about the proposed solutions, those dealing with soil, land use and other economic and social surveys, and so on? What does the minister say about the proposal with regard to rehabilitation and re-establishment proposed by the Canadian Federation of Agriculture?

Not one word was said by the minister about the proposal for a special credit agency that must be integrated into a scheme such as this. These are matters which the minister—

Mr. Hamilton (Qu'Appelle): Mr. Chairman, I must rise on a point of personal privilege. The hon. member made a flat statement that I did not refer to the credit scheme and so on. If he had listened to my speech, I made that very clear.

An hon. Member: Your speech was written yesterday by somebody else.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): Of course, Mr. Chairman, you will observe that that is the kind of observation which the minister is entitled to make by way of argument, but it certainly is not a matter of privilege.

Mr. Hamilton (Qu'Appelle): Mr. Chairman, I have stated flatly my point of privilege as quietly and as courteously as I can, that the hon. member for Essex East has misinformed the house when he says I did not mention that matter. I told him very quietly and courteously that I did mention it. When I catch him in an untruth, he says it is not a question of privilege.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): I would point out, Mr. Chairman, that this is the second time the Minister of Agriculture has taken up my time with points of order that are not points of order and with questions of privilege that are not questions of privilege. However, I have no objection.

If some of the matters referred to in these two briefs were to be implied in the speech of the minister given a few moments ago,

he will have an opportunity to clearly indicate them. All I am now saying is that the minister did not refer to the Canadian Federation of Agriculture at all. He made no reference to their briefs, and I am surely entitled to say that the minister has ignored their recommendations and in the plan he has in mind he seemingly has no intention of following their recommendations. I know the minister is impatient; he does not like these things being pointed out to him. But he is the author of his present difficulty, and I am not.

The situation, briefly, is this. The former government under Mr. St. Laurent recognized that something had to be done—

An hon. Member: Why didn't you do it?

Mr. Martin (Essex East):—over the long term to deal with agriculture. Toward that end he caused to be set up in the other place a study that has been made progressively up until this time. That study, according to the other place is not yet finished. It is a study that will in the long term address itself to at least 25 per cent of the farming population of our country, and in other particulars to all of the farmers of our country, in a manner designed to deal with the fundamental crisis that does face agriculture at the present time.

Any measure designed to meet that fundamental situation will receive the support of every member of this house. It will encourage the co-operation of government at all levels, provincial and municipal as well as federal, and all voluntary bodies.

The minister says he does not intend to proceed with this measure right away; that he does not intend to proceed until the provinces have had an opportunity of examining this legislation in detail. I say that having brought forward a proposal such as this, having taken these various steps, the minister must not now, on the occasion of his first presentation of agricultural policy to this house, regard this so-called achievement of his as in any way meeting or satisfying the promises made by the Prime Minister and other members of the government to the farmers of Canada in the elections of 1957 and 1958.

The farmers are now faced with a critical situation in terms of loss of income. The Minister of Agriculture himself acknowledged this when he pointed out the number of farmers in Saskatchewan whose income is less than \$1,200 a year—the number of farms in Ontario, the largest province, from which income has fallen to below substandard levels. That is a statement of the situation in our country. The minister, together with the anxious members who sit behind him, must