

*Livestock Feed Assistance Act*

At the present time there are in the two territories a total of 25 farms, I believe. That is a disgrace, Mr. Speaker. These farms have not been allowed to expand, although there is potential for market gardens that would supply the people of the north with fresh vegetables so that they would not be burdened with exorbitant freight rates on produce coming in from the south. It is unfortunate that we must have this bill today but it is necessary because, over the years, the government has not seen fit to allow the expansion of agriculture.

I wonder if the Livestock Feed Assistance Act has not distorted the livestock industry in Canada. There is no doubt that this act has caused hog production to move from Alberta and Saskatchewan into Ontario and Quebec. It has also had an effect on beef production in the west. I suggest that there are certain natural advantages for the production of pork and beef in western Canada, but I will not pursue this at the present time.

Before closing, Mr. Speaker, I should like to make a few comments on the present agricultural situation in western Canada. While perhaps this bill does not apply to the very serious drought in southern and central Saskatchewan, the government will undoubtedly be called upon to give feed freight assistance to livestock producers in western Canada. As I travelled back to Ottawa from my constituency last weekend, I could see that the crops which were planted on stubble have turned yellow. Even a heavy rain or a series of heavy rains will not bring those fields back to life now. There will not be a particularly good crop on the summerfallow. There is practically no forage. Even the ditches, which usually provide a good source of hay and alfalfa, are not worth cutting. The situation is desperate and will become more so.

While the government recently announced that it will put up some \$7 million to assist with drought programs, I would suggest that it will require much more than that if we are to assist our livestock industry and ensure that the necessary basic herds are retained.

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It will be necessary for the federal government to work in conjunction with the provincial governments. It will be necessary for them to ensure that screenings are not shipped to Thunder Bay, that they are retained on the prairies, because once the screenings are shipped to Thunder Bay, to Churchill, and so on, if they are required—and they undoubtedly will be—then we have to pay the freight back. In my opinion, this is a needless waste of money.

I would hope that the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Whelan) will take note not only of what I have said this evening but of what members have said over the past several weeks about the seriousness of the situation on the prairies.

I do not think that I have anything further to say except that we on this side support the amendments in this bill and we will not delay its passage. There is no question that it will be passed by ten o'clock tonight.

**Mr. Stan J. Hovdebo (Prince Albert):** Mr. Speaker, I am happy to speak on this bill before this Parliament because it may have some significant factors to offer in the development of the north. Not many of us appreciate the great possibilities for agricultural development in the Northwest Territories and the Yukon. Probably we should all spend some time with hon. members who represent the north, such as the hon. member for the Yukon (Mr. Nielsen), who can give us some specific insight into the possibilities of agricultural development in those areas.

As an educator with a great interest in agriculture, I spent a considerable amount of time in the Northwest Territories and the Yukon. I lived in such places as Dawson City, Whitehorse, Aklavik and Inuvik. Some of the things that I will mention here were mentioned before the committee, but I think they bear repeating before this House because they will give some insight into the possibilities of agricultural development in the north.

For example, Dawson City in the gold rush days had a population that varied from 25,000 to 40,000 people. A good portion of the food, particularly green vegetables, was grown in that area at that time. The area also supported a number of cattle as well as a large number of horses that were used in the gold fields at the time. Therefore it has the potential to support many more people than it is supporting at this time.

The Yukon Valley in the Dawson area is very fertile. Because of the almost 24 hours of sunshine or daylight in the north, there is a much quicker growth than one would expect in the south. For example, while living in Dawson City, my wife planted a cauliflower on July 1 and we ate it as a mature cauliflower on August 15, which is Discovery Day for the Dawson City area.

**Mr. Nielsen:** You missed it by two days.

**Mr. Hovdebo:** August 17, sorry.

There were a dozen or so farms in the Yukon at that time, possibly there are more now. There is more land that can be developed if it is needed and development is encouraged.

In the Northwest Territories the whole of the Liard Valley from the B.C. border up to Fort Simpson, part of the Mackenzie Valley, has been tested and could support a considerable amount of agriculture. That area is about 4,000 square miles of possible farm country.

I think many of us have a wrong idea about the climate in the Yukon and the Northwest Territories. For instance, I can remember very distinctly being outside at two o'clock in the morning when I lived in Inuvik. It was broad daylight and the temperature was 88 degrees Fahrenheit. That is not unusual in either the Yukon or the Northwest Territories. Inuvik is several miles north of the Arctic circle.

In Inuvik and Aklavik it was quite common to see cabbages grow to a foot or a foot and a half in diameter. The missions in that area kept their population going almost entirely on food that they grew locally. We should not neglect the possible