

Grain

began and my sympathies are certainly with the farmer in the condition in which he finds himself in western Canada. After all, we must look after the farmer. I view the occupation he is engaged in as a great work for the benefit of us all. The farmer is the greatest gambler of any man in business, in the professions or in anything else we have in our communities. He gambles from the time the seed is put in the ground. He gambles on whether he is going to get the proper soil productivity, and also on whether he is going to get good cultivation of the soil. He goes right on gambling to the time of harvesting. He gambles on weather conditions, and worst of all he has to gamble on marketing conditions. Well, it is not quite so bad gambling on the market conditions in the east as it is in the west, because in the east the farmer uses his own experience and smaller organizations in marketing his products. But in western Canada the government takes charge of the marketing conditions, and according to the report we had last year it lost a good deal of money. Someone repeated the statement tonight that the wheat growers, through marketing conditions set up by the government, lost about \$300 or \$400 million.

Mr. Howe: I thought we settled all that in the Manitoba plebiscite.

Mr. Sinnott: That is nonsense.

Mr. Blackmore: It is not nonsense.

Mr. McLure: I am only saying what western members have said. I, for one, supported the \$65 million they got from our treasury last year. I am not making any complaint about that. My sympathy goes out to them again on this occasion, and I am pleased that some guarantee is being given them so they can be ready for the crop season. And, instead of making it a short-term credit, why not make it for a longer term, so they will have a chance to get along until the crop is taken off?

I should like to add some personal observations, the first of which would be that while the farmer is a gambler, the fisherman is a real runner-up. I am proud to see the Minister of Fisheries (Mr. Mayhew) in his seat, after escaping from the communists in Korea. I know he will appreciate what I am going to say about the poor fishermen in my own locality. Last November there was a very heavy storm in that area, with winds reaching a velocity of 70 miles an hour, with extra high tides which broke up practically all the breakwaters, so that the waters flooded in over the beaches and around the homes of the fishermen. It invaded their fishing shanties and their equipment. A large percentage of that equipment was a

total loss, so the fishermen are left without the security that would permit them to ask for a loan.

I bring this to the attention of the minister. When we are voting money for the western farmers I suggest something could be done for those fishermen. I know the machinery has already been set up in the Department of Fisheries, so it would take the burden of administration off the shoulders of the Minister of Trade and Commerce (Mr. Howe). This would cost only a few thousand dollars, as compared with the millions that would go to the west. Further, it could be operated through the fishermen's loans board which is already set up. I know the minister would find, upon investigation, that the loss suffered by these poor people has been very great. I know some of them whose homes have been disrupted. They had to leave their homes during the storm. Their shanties, buildings, machinery, equipment, boats, traps, rope and all other gear were lost. Some of it was beaten by the waves against the rocks. Surely those fishermen are deserving of some consideration at the hands of the government. If we are to be generous to the western farmers, then I want to see the fishermen of my constituency in Prince Edward Island receive what is properly their due.

Motion agreed to and the house went into committee, Mr. Dion in the chair.

Mr. Wright: I should like to pursue the matter of interest rates on these loans. I must admit that it is some time since I have done any commercial borrowing from the banks. For a good many years I knew well what their rate of interest was on loans. The minister has said that it will be the commercial rate. Is that 6 per cent?

Mr. Howe: Mr. Chairman, my hon. friend is now discussing the details of the bill. When it is before the house, all that will be set out. I do not think that at this stage I should discuss what is in the bill.

Mr. Wright: I am only asking the commercial rate of interest at the moment. A principle is involved. The minister suggested that it was something the same as the loans under the small loans legislation for veterans. It will be recalled that in that instance we guaranteed the banks against certain losses; and because of those guarantees the banks made those loans at less than the commercial rate of interest.

In this instance we are guaranteeing a much higher loss than we guaranteed under the measure which dealt with the veterans. I think the same consideration should be given in this instance. If the banks are being