

buying and selling, and governments were expected to be a judicial authority holding the balance fair and even between all parties. But today we find the government engaged in the business of buying and selling.

The leader of the opposition speaks about the hazards taken by grain growers. It is, of course, a risk that has been taken from time immemorial. When the first man planted the first seed he was filled with anxiety as to whether it would grow or be destroyed by excessive heat or cold, wind or rain. In fact, farmers have always gambled on whether they will get a crop. There has always been an element of chance in farming, and there is today. My friend has stated that the desire of the farmer is to shift responsibility in the speculation to the shoulders of the rest of the people.

Hon. Mr. Haig: Right.

Hon. Mr. Roebuck: The element of chance will not be minimized by the fact that he who plants does not bear the full responsibility for the success or failure of the operation, but shifts it to somebody engaged in some other occupation. What is required in this matter is not a socialistic status, but rather an insurance policy, which should be part of the costs of carrying on the business of agriculture.

When this bill is considered in committee it will be explained in more detail, and perhaps I will learn more about it than I know now. But my first impression of it is unfavourable.

I understand that there is now on hand some 10 million pounds of butter, bought by the public of Canada—a purely socialistic move—with 8 million pounds delivered. In addition, we have on option some 5 million pounds. Perhaps such a system will serve some public purpose, but the final result may not be a happy one. I am satisfied that continued operations of this kind by government agencies will not lead us in the direction that we desire to go, but in all probability will end in disaster.

Hon. G. H. Barbour: Honourable senators, I should like to say a few words about this bill. In the first place, I am in favour of it, and I only wish I could say as much for the bill on combines that is to the front in another place. I do not think the operation of this measure will be a drain on the people of Canada, other than the farmers, who react very quickly to losses. When the price of eggs, for instance, goes down, and eggs become unprofitable, the farmer stops feeding his hens enough to produce the quantity of eggs they would produce if they were well fed, and he raises fewer chickens. The

result is that within a year or two the public is paying a higher price for eggs. The same is true of butter.

Another problem facing the citizens of Canada today, and one which will become more acute, is the shortage of milk. Dairy farming is a seven-day-a-week business.

Hon. Mr. Roebuck: Why not have the government set up a public dairy to milk the cows?

Hon. Mr. Barbour: If the dairy farmer worked on a forty-four or a forty-hour week, milk would probably cost twice as much as it does now.

Hon. Mr. Aseltine: Hear, hear.

Hon. Mr. Barbour: The growing of potatoes is the chief cash crop of the farmers in Prince Edward Island, and I will tell you how price support legislation helped them in the last two or three years. The honourable senator from Rosetown (Hon. Mr. Aseltine) some time ago made a comparison of the income taxes paid in the various provinces, and referred particularly to the small number of tax payers among the potato growers of Prince Edward Island. In 1949 and 1950 the price of our potatoes, including perhaps the best class of certified seed potatoes in the world—

Hon. Mr. Grani: Hear, hear.

Hon. Mr. Barbour: —was only 68 cents a bushel. Last October the board set the price at 90 cents a bushel, and shortly afterwards it was increased to \$1.10. The market then ran away, and advanced to \$2 a bushel. You see, honourable senators, potatoes which for two years were sold at an average price of 68 cents a bushel—and some were sold as low as 45 cents—are today going at \$2 a bushel. The farmers decided that potato growing was unprofitable, and they reduced their acreage; also, the poor growing conditions in the summer resulted in lighter crops.

For my part, I think we would be better off if we had an average price. I know that the price cannot be completely controlled, but if the farmer got, say, \$1 a bushel for his potatoes year in and year out, he would be better off, and no hardship would be inflicted on the people who live in the city.

This measure may help the production of butter. If the price is stabilized at around 63 cents a pound, we probably will not have to buy so much from foreign countries.

Hon. T. A. Crerar: Mr. Speaker, I have not had an opportunity to scrutinize this bill very closely, but it is quite apparent to me that it represents another long step down the socialist road—