

there. Why is that? It is because they cannot find a candidate. And if they found a candidate, his sons or his wife would not vote for him if he ran for the Liberal party. He would have nobody voting for him. That is why they are so silent.

Prairie farmers have caught on to Liberal proposals. On June 2 of last year the Prime Minister promised them that cash advances would be doubled and repayments reduced. "Get rid of the small farmer; get rid of every farmer; get them out of our hair," is what they are saying in this government—and western Canada has caught on. Within the last seven days, the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Stanfield)—

An hon. Member: Which leader?

Mr. Horner:—the Leader of the Opposition received 35,000 coupons objecting to the Liberal government's proposal with regard to agriculture. But that does not stop them. They are going to proceed with it. What does the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Olson) have to say about the matter of cash income, which is related directly to cash advances? We heard the person in charge of the Canadian Wheat Board and responsible for cash advances say that wheat farmers have just gone through the worst period in their history. He said that they need to have cash advances doubled and repayments reduced. What did the Minister of Agriculture, who fell asleep during today's question period, have to say on December 3, 1970? He said:

—one wage earner in three draws a pay cheque either directly or indirectly from the agricultural industry.

The agricultural industry is an important industry when we consider all the wage earners. What else did the Minister of Agriculture have to say? He said that cash advances are an indirect form of aid. Then he said that about 51,000 farmers from the three prairie provinces have not repaid their loans. But believe me, Mr. Speaker, they are trying to repay them. I should like to quote the Minister of Agriculture as reported in the *Western Producer* of December 3, 1970:

Mr. Olson said the federal government spends about 3.3 per cent of the total federal budget on agriculture—the Canada Department of Agriculture spending \$281 million and other departments and agencies spending an additional \$142 million. The totals do not include the "indirect aid" to agriculture through such programs as farm products purchased as food aid to other countries.

Admitting the difficulties of making exact comparisons, he said Canada spent about \$350 per person employed in agriculture in 1968, and this compares with \$675 in West Germany, \$980 in France, \$1,059 in Britain, \$1,287 in the United States and \$1,502 in Switzerland.

That is what the Minister of Agriculture said regarding what is directly spent on agriculture in Canada, in comparison with what is spent on agriculture in other countries in direct and indirect aid. What does the minister in charge of the Canadian Wheat Board have to say about this whole proposal regarding aid? He said before five o'clock today that we went through a very difficult period in agriculture and that we had to double the cash advances and reduce the repayments, but he said there is

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still \$95 million outstanding in western Canada. There are 51,285 farmers who have taken advantage of this loans program and who have not paid them back, but he said that this is a great reduction from the previous year and that the loans will eventually be paid back.

He also said the following, as reported in the *Western Producer* of Thursday, February 4:

Mr. Lang said a new quota system, "designed to avoid a bias in favour of the highest price grain, which in the past has been wheat", will be announced within the next month.

That is in essence what he said a few minutes before five o'clock with regard to this program. He said that the whole bill is designed in such a way as not to create a bias in favour of wheat. We are now going to include grains such as rye, flaxseed and rapeseed, the production of which would make farmers eligible for cash advances once this legislation is passed. Under this bill, farmers would be entitled to receive \$1 a bushel for wheat and this in essence would encourage the production of wheat. But I point out to hon. members that under the old legislation farmers were entitled to receive 40 cents a bushel for oats and 70 cents a bushel for barley. Under the present bill it is up to the Governor in Council to determine what amounts shall be made available, and for what periods.

How can the cash advances' legislation be used to encourage the production of any kind of grain if the Governor in Council does not have the guts, the determination, the fortitude or foresight to say, "We encourage the production of such-and-such commodity"? The minister in charge of the Canadian Wheat Board and the Minister of Agriculture have said in this House, "Last year we did encourage the production of barley." I would like the minister in charge of the Wheat Board to stand up and tell us when, before May 4 a year ago, he encouraged the production of barley. I would like the Minister of Agriculture to say when, before May 4 last year, he encouraged the production of barley. I say May 4 because now in western Canada the farmers are preparing to seed. At no time before May 4 last year did either minister encourage the production of barley.

• (9:40 p.m.)

I see the minister rearing his head; I would say "his ugly head" but I have no personal objection to it and therefore I would not want to say "his ugly head." But at no time did the Minister of Agriculture or the minister in charge of the Wheat Board rise in this House before May 4 a year ago and say they wanted to encourage the production of barley. But they say that this legislation has in fact encouraged the production of wheat. That cannot be substantiated, but what can be substantiated—I want to emphasize this before I close—is that they deliberately doubled the cash advances available under western grains, wheat, oats and barley last year and they did it because the Prime Minister said they would before the June 25 election. They did it and they were advised on October 28, as recorded at page 2123 of *Hansard*, that this would result in the farmers incurring debts that they would not be able to pay.