

Supply—Agriculture

the maritime provinces when there is all this money being paid to western Canada, without any complaint coming from the people in these other areas.

Mr. Nowlan: The hon. member for Moose Jaw-Lake Centre asked a question and the hon. member for Royal has answered it, but I feel I should answer it also even if the Minister of Finance does not. The Minister of Finance was down in my constituency this summer, but I only saw him for a split second as he was driving through the Annapolis valley. He could very easily have answered the question from what he saw in that one constituency. The expenditures which have been made under this item throughout the years would be justified by conditions existing in that constituency. I am not particularly favourable to the payment of subsidies, and I am not discussing the relative merits of each of these expenditures, but I can say without fear of contradiction that the payment of this subsidy brings a more direct return to people generally than any other type of expenditure that could be made.

As a result of these payments the dairy industry and other forms of the livestock industry generally, as well as the poultry industry, are able to continue. My county of Kings, Nova Scotia, is now the largest poultry producer in Canada. This has come about with developments during wartime and since.

Mr. Pickersgill: And the Newfoundland market.

Mr. Nowlan: All these factors enter into that situation, but it could not exist if it were not for this freight rate subsidy, because of course the cost of moving feed grain all the way across the country to the eastern border is quite large. I did not intend to mention this item at all, but I could not sit here and let someone challenge it. I am satisfied that some items should be questioned more than others, and some are more valuable than others; but I am satisfied that there is no item more valuable than this one in the whole group of supplementary estimates.

Mr. Pearkes: When the minister replies to the hon. member for Moose Jaw-Lake Centre, I hope he will point out to him that the prairie farmers enjoy the farmer-to-farmer benefit in the sale of their feed grain. When one prairie farmer is anxious to unload a lot of his grade 5 wheat he just sells it to his neighbour, and they do not have to go through the wheat board. But when the British Columbia farmer has to buy his wheat it has to go through the wheat board and he has to pay the premium thereon. I hope

the minister will point out to the hon. member for Moose Jaw-Lake Centre that there would be no chickens and no turkeys on the prairies if it were not for the early-hatching eggs which come from British Columbia.

Mr. Gillis: It is much easier to justify this subsidy than the gold mining subsidy. It is national in scope and very necessary in the part of the country in which I live, particularly in relation to the poultry farmer. Last year, quite a few people came to see me on this particular question of feed grains. Despite the subsidy, feed grains have gone up in price by \$5 a ton pretty well all across the country. In the last year the price of eggs has gone down in the maritime provinces. If they are to continue their operations on the present basis, then they need this subsidy. If it were not for this subsidy there is no doubt as to what would happen in Kings county in regard to poultry, and all through the maritime provinces. It is a very lucrative industry there and has been built up largely because of this subsidy. I am not going to argue it; I know the minister is taking the right position on it and he should continue it.

I would point out to the hon. member for Moose Jaw-Lake Centre that this subsidy is a great help in the marketing of feed grains in the part of the country from which he comes. In many sections of the country where these feed grains are needed we have to drag them thousands of miles across the country because we cannot grow feed grains and other grains in many parts of Canada. They do not grow there. They have to be obtained from the United States on the eastern seaboard or from Saskatchewan and Manitoba and from other parts of the country that sell feed grains. Without this subsidy I am reasonably certain that we would not be taking feed grains from western Canada all the way across the country because we can get them much closer on the eastern seaboard. This is one subsidy that no hon. member who has any understanding of what it means and what it has meant would suggest for a moment should be discontinued. It is a freight rate subsidy. That kind of subsidy is necessary if we are to market our own goods provincially.

Mr. Charlton: I am sorry the hon. member for Moose Jaw-Lake Centre brought up this question today. I can assure him that if we did not have this freight rate subsidy the western farmer would not have a very big market for his feed grain. I can also assure him that if they do not keep this subsidy the feeders in the east will be buying a great deal less of it. It is a very important part