



CANADA

CANADIAN WEEKLY BULLETIN

INFORMATION DIVISION • DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS • OTTAWA, CANADA

Vol. 16, No. 6

February 8, 1961

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NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL PROGRAMME

Moving, in the House of Commons on January 25, the adoption of a resolution whose main purpose was "the improvement of the economic position of those farmers whose land is presently classified as marginal or sub-marginal", the Minister of Agriculture, Mr. Alvin Hamilton, spoke as follows concerning the National Agricultural Programme, upon which the resolution in question directly bore:

"Generally speaking, the objective behind the National Agricultural Programme is to give agriculture a reasonably fair share of the national income. We believe that this parity of income should not be by charity, but by providing opportunities for the farmers to help themselves. The Prime Minister stated on August 30, 1958, that 'our conception of a national policy is based on the belief that the national welfare demands positive action to meet the basic causes of distress and maladjustment in particular industries and regions.'

STARK STATISTICS

"To point up the problem..., I should like to place some figures before the House that outline the problem in stark and dramatic terms. According to the economic classification of farms in the 1956 census, there were 21 per cent of Canadian farms that produced less than \$1,200 worth of produce annually. At that time, out of a total of 575,015 farms, there were 120,242 that fell into this category....

"In the report of the Royal Commission on Rural Life in Saskatchewan...the figures for 1950 are given and they indicate that in Saskatchewan 26 per cent of the total farms had a value of sales between \$0.00 and \$1, -199.00 *per annum*. The same figures for all of Canada for 1950 reveal that 38 per cent of the total farms had a value of sales between \$0.00 and \$1,199,000 *per annum*.

"These Royal Commission figures appear to be worse than the 1956 DBS statistics, but that is because they are based on different criteria. In 1956 the criterion was estimated annual production that would include the value of the goods consumed on the farm. The 1950 figures are based on the value of goods sold, or in other words, the gross cash income.

"Recently, in a report dated September 1, 1960, by the Conservation Council of Ontario to the government of that province, I find this paragraph:

'It has been reported in an earlier section of this report that we have in Ontario 33, -000,000 acres of land south of the Precambrian Shield. About 20,000,000 acres of this is being farmed but only 12,000,000 acres can be considered good land. We have, then a large acreage outside the 12,000,000 acres which could be used for non-agricultural purposes without damaging significantly our ability to produce good and cheap food in the future.'

"In their report, the Council recommend the vacation of marginal land where economic

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