

Rural Development

aim of the measure is to help the depressed agricultural areas in which this type of assistance is needed. This measure will be spread over ten provinces, and it seems to me this \$50 million will have to be spread very thinly indeed in order to cover the areas in which it is required.

I hope this is just a preliminary amount and that the government will see to it that additional sums are made readily available as they are needed, because I am convinced they will be needed before very long. I should like to ask the minister a question, which I hope he will answer when he makes his summation at the end of this debate. What is the yardstick which the government is going to use in deciding which areas will receive this very much needed help?

I have in mind my own riding of Northumberland, and areas there which I believe to be very much in need of aid through this measure. I should like to know from the minister just how the decisions will be made as to which farming areas will receive this kind of assistance, and which will be excluded from it. During the election campaign the government claimed that the intention in this measure would be to take the people off the farms they are working; develop those farms into larger units, and then sell the larger units back to the farmers. The people whom I represent are not in favour of that kind of move, because they do not wish to be taken off their farms.

When they are removed, where do they go? They have no choice but to move to the city. With the new automated system into which we are moving more and more every day, one needs special skills in order to take a place in our factories in this automated age. People who have come off the farms will be at a great disadvantage in finding an opportunity to make a livelihood without having had the type of training which is needed. What the people whom I represent wish is to remain on the farms where they are today, and receive financial assistance in the way of farm loans at reasonable rates of interest, and farm loans which can be obtained without the many obstructions which are put in the way of our farmers today.

I have found that in many cases unfair restrictions are placed in the way of our farmers who desperately need financial assistance in order to buy the additional land which is needed to have an economic farm, and to buy the necessary machinery so that they can farm it economically. I hope the

[Mr. Hees.]

main purpose of this measure will turn out to be the encouragement of our farmers to remain on their farms and to enlarge the size of their farms by the purchase of additional land, and the additional machinery which they need. I hope they will not have to move off the farms so that the government can take over their land, change it in various ways, and then at some later date, after they have displaced the people, sell it back to them.

I hope this plan will make it possible for people to maintain the family farm of today. Enlarge it if necessary, but maintain it. I am convinced this is the basis of our agricultural life, and indeed the basis of our true Canadian society.

● (9:00 p.m.)

We must make it possible for our young people to remain on farms. To do so we must make loans available to them at reasonable rates and without impediments. In this manner they will be able to carry on the traditions of their families by doing the work they are best suited to do, and like to do. They will not have to move to towns and cities to work in factories, but rather remain in the areas in which they were born; which they know; and in which they wish to live.

As we all know, our farmers need financial help today in order to be competitive. This help should take the form of reasonable loans so that they can purchase the machinery necessary to farm economically, and overcome the cost-price squeeze in which they find themselves at this time. Those of us who are associated with farmers, and have the honour to represent farming communities, realize that farmers are caught in a vicious cost-price squeeze, because the prices they receive for their products remain stationary, or continue to go down, whereas the cost of supplies, machinery, and other things they must purchase on a day to day basis continue to go up. The return they receive for the capital they expend is getting less and less.

This bill calls for the setting up of advisory committees. I hope the minister when he concludes the debate, will explain how these committees are to be set up, and what type of personnel they will contain. In this regard, I should like to mention something I found to be very useful when I was in the government some years ago, as minister of Trade and Commerce. We wanted to know how best the businessmen of this country could expand our exports. To obtain this information, we held a series of conferences in various parts of the