

Supply—Agriculture

P.F.R.A. can take the initiative on its own much more easily than it can under ARDA. To continue:

9. Reaffirmed support for the principle of producer marketing boards for farm commodities.

The plank in the Liberal program in the last election dealing with this question reads as follows:

Encourage national co-operatives and marketing boards, where farmers want them.

I think that is a program which should be worked out in consultation with the farmers and the provinces in order to get the most effective of marketing boards possible. Then, next:

10. Reaffirmed support for Crowsnest pass freight rates and the maintenance of the special freight rates from Georgian bay to St. Lawrence and Atlantic positions on export grain.

I think that is a non-political plank because all political parties in Canada are opposed to any tampering with the Crowsnest pass rates. The last one is:

11. Continuation of the prairie farm assistance program and federal-provincial co-operation to provide more adequate crop insurance at reasonable premiums.

Mr. Chairman, prairie farm assistance was placed on the statute books by the Liberal party. The Conservative government has not seen fit to raise the awards under this act and we feel that further improvements in the future will once again be made by a Liberal government. We feel that the suggestions with relation to crop insurance are proper and necessary if crop insurance is to become more than a slogan or a policy that assists only very small number of farmers. Our agricultural policy, Mr. Chairman, not only supports the wheat pool program but goes beyond these proposals. It goes beyond these proposals in relation to the co-operative movement itself, of which the Saskatchewan wheat pool is an important member. Our agricultural program states—and I read from the pamphlet distributed during the last election—that through the industrial development bank we will provide long term capital for co-operatives, as well as implementing the other plank I have already read, which was to encourage co-operatives and national marketing boards where farmers want them. Another key plank is the assurance to western grain producers of a floor price of \$2 per bushel, basis No. 1 northern Fort William, with other grades based in proportion to the floor for No. 1 northern wheat. Again this is diametrically opposed to the policy of the Minister of Agriculture who, in spite of having told the farmers during the last election “I will get you \$2.19 per bushel!”, has never been able to get even \$2

per bushel, and has now gone to the farmers and said “I want back part of the price in order to insure against losses from credit sales”.

If the agricultural program of this country is to work, it must be a national program. It must be a program designed to improve agriculture in all parts of Canada—the dairy industry, the beef industry, the fruit and vegetable industry, as well as the grain and other branches of the industry. We feel that this kind of comprehensive program is needed in the interest of farmers in all parts of Canada.

In conclusion, I underline that in order to make our agricultural industry prosperous and to give the farmers the chance of improving their standard of living, action must be taken by the Canadian government to restore the health of the Canadian economy, to get our economy moving at home, and to go forward in a rapid and aggressive way to increase trade with countries around the world.

Mr. Woolliams: Mr. Chairman, I am pleased to take part in this debate today. Like many western members, I have the privilege and the honour of representing a large agricultural area and constituency, namely, the constituency of Bow River. I think all members of parliament who have represented Bow River have always maintained that Bow River, and those constituencies adjoining Bow River, is the heart of the cattle country of Alberta. Probably, although this may be showing a little prejudice, it is also the heart of the cattle belt of western Canada.

I should like to make two suggestions with regard to the cattlemen themselves. There have been over the last few years serious dangers arising from the breaking out among cattle of a disease known as brucellosis. As we know, areas where there is any danger of a breakout or a suspected breakout are quarantined, and this makes it very difficult to market cattle. This occurred in two areas of Bow River, but the veterinary surgeons employed by the Department of Agriculture and other officials quickly got to work and assisted the ranchers in this regard, and the matter was solved. I have one small suggestion to make—and I am glad to see the minister here today, and also his parliamentary secretary. In Alberta, and I think I can say this in respect of other prairie provinces, we have no veterinary medical school. I think with the continued dangers from various diseases in the cattle industry, such as brucellosis, it would be a great move forward if something could be done to secure help from the federal government, in conjunction with

[Mr. Argue.]