

Agricultural Policies

Mr. Olson: Receipts from potatoes showed an increase of 10 per cent, from \$61 million in 1968 to \$67 million in 1969. Corn receipts were down slightly because there was a shorter crop year. They were down from \$29 million in 1968 to \$25 million in 1969. Then, we can turn to rapeseed receipts which increased almost 50 per cent from \$33 million to \$51 million in 1969. Flaxseed is even more remarkable, the receipts having increased from \$26 million in 1968 to \$57 million in 1969. Barley receipts went up from \$85 million dollars in 1968 to \$92 million in 1969.

I could go on and on, Mr. Speaker, but these are just some of the other important sectors of the agricultural industry. I should like to talk for a minute or two about the dairy industry, though I see my time is getting short. There have been some serious problems in that industry resulting from production overrunning effective market demand. The policies we put into effect on April 1 this year have already caused a remarkable improvement in that industry and we are beginning to see some daylight after the difficult years we had in the past.

I hope, Mr. Speaker, that hon. members do not really mean what is said in this motion. If they want to reverse all of these policies, then we will have unwarranted and chaotic conditions in Canadian agriculture. What Canadian farmers want and have a right to expect, and what some hon. members opposite may have been talking about although they did not articulate or define it too clearly, is more advance planning—

Mr. Horner: You have it in your notes.

Mr. Olson: The hon. member for Crowfoot sits there making a lot of noise, and is probably going to make more in a few moments, but all this is really not relevant to the problems facing people in agriculture. I was saying that I think farmers legitimately are seeking and are entitled to as much planning, as much advance market forecasting and so on, as anyone is capable of giving them.

An hon. Member: Agreed; but can they participate?

Mr. Olson: The capability for planning has been enhanced considerably in the past few months. We announced some weeks ago that we were expanding the economic section of the Department of Agriculture. There are such things as Canfarm, a computerized system, to assist in making plans and to assess his operation, which is something that

[Mr. Horner.]

needs to be done. To say that nothing has been done in the past is not true. There have been outlook conferences in the past years where experts were brought in to try and project a year in advance what the market situation would be and what the production level ought to be to fit that situation. Perhaps this type of thing has not been publicized widely enough but the information has been circulated. In addition there is a further mid-year projection of the outlook conference published yesterday and this is expected to be helpful. There are other aspects of the market situation affecting Canadian farmers which result from decisions by other people and other countries. We do not have control over this situation, of course, but we must all respond to it.

I hope that members from all sides of the House, Mr. Speaker, will co-operate with the Department of Agriculture and the farmers in trying to improve the mechanics and the structure. These include such things as amendments to the Canada Grains Act, Bill C-197, the outlook conference and even some good advice that could come from the task force report published a few days ago. That kind of co-operation would do the farmers of this country a service rather than the disservice of these disparaging remarks which we heard from the Opposition earlier today.

Mr. J. H. Horner (Crowfoot): I might say at the outset of my remarks, Mr. Speaker, that I have never listened to a minister of agriculture give such a naïve speech about the problems with which he has to deal. A number of times during his speech I said that he needed a new speech writer. If he had written his own speech I know he could have done better because of his knowledge of the agricultural industry.

I wholeheartedly support the mover of this motion, Mr. Speaker. While I had nothing to do with the drafting of the motion, I should like to point out the wording, in part, is as follows:

That this House calls upon the government to reverse its present policies...

I am not going to read any further than that. The minister was so confused about agricultural policy that he listed a whole host of policies that have been in existence for a long time in the Department of Agriculture. He mentioned agricultural research but this is not a present policy; it has been around for quite a while. He went on to list livestock, the record of the harvest of various crops,