

Supply—Agriculture

make them they are violating the rules. The government's policy in this respect apparently is to let this process continue, to allow the farmer slowly to lose control over the things he has held dear to him for so many years and to allow the farmer's control of his right to produce what he wants, control of his right to market as he wants, control of his own destiny to filter into the hands of a few small groups of people, many of whom are not even resident in Canada and have no intention of becoming residents of Canada.

I am of the opinion that this can be overcome to a degree in the same way it has been overcome in other sections of the economy. It can be overcome to a degree through the development of co-operatives whereby the farmer will have control over his own vertical integration system, control over his own contract and farming arrangements. Another way is through regulation of private financial and industrial concerns to ensure, in so far as farmers are affected by the activities of such concerns, that the farmers will get the squarest possible deal and will not be placed under the control of somebody else.

Mr. Woolliams: Mr. Chairman, in taking part in this debate I should like to say a few words about the Minister of Agriculture himself. His constituency adjoins mine, and no matter what side of the house we may be on I think that as members of parliament and representatives of the people of Canada we will all agree that the portfolio of agriculture is not an easy one. The big trouble in dealing with agriculture is that it is like the seven blind men feeling various parts of the elephant which all feel different to them. Agriculture covers so many different items, so many different crops, so many different phases that when you cure one problem you may aggravate something else.

I certainly do not want to get into an argument with the last speaker but he mentioned that there had been a lot said in this debate and he thought there must be something wrong. I would say there is nothing wrong and as a member from western Canada I say there should be a lot of words spoken about agriculture because that is our primary industry. That is how all of us make a living because when the farmer in western Canada does well the businessmen of western Canada also do well.

I should like to deal with a few things that concern my province and constituency having to do with a phase of agriculture called ranching. Sometimes Albertans are accused

of being a lot like Texans but they can boast about having some of the finest ranches in Canada. I can tell members who have not visited the area that in the foothills of the Rocky mountains they will find some of the finest herds of cattle you will see anywhere in Canada and a pound of beef can probably be produced cheaper there than anywhere else in Canada because in many places the cattle can graze all year round.

Therefore, when legislation is brought in or a program is suggested with reference to the production of cattle, what may apply to one section of the country may not apply to another. In many places in Canada, even in some sections of Alberta, cattle have to be barn fed for six or seven months of the year. The people who have to barn feed their cattle are faced with tough competition from the rancher because the rancher's cattle can graze for most of the year.

There is one matter that is of considerable concern to Alberta ranchers at this time, and that is what may happen as a result of diversification in farming. I have discussed the matter with ranchers and many members have suggested that the farmers of western Canada should diversify their production. In the process of diversification many of them have gone into raising cattle. In the last two years at least we have been very fortunate to have a good market for our cattle in the United States. This means, of course, that every ranch is producing every pound of beef possible and where there has been diversification on farms there is also a lot of beef being produced.

There is always a danger when there is overproduction and there is the problem of what will happen if the United States market is cut off. The hon. member for Dufferin-Simcoe referred to the situation when our market for cattle in the United States was cut off in 1920 and 1930. We know exactly what happened to cattle prices in Canada. It is a source of anxiety to the ranchers and other cattle producers of Canada to know that if this market is cut off they will be faced with an immediate problem. However, it bears repeating to refer again to the stabilization legislation. It is sometimes underemphasized that under that legislation there are two price levels. One price is written right into the act and cannot be changed except by act of parliament. It is provided right in the act that the price will never fall below 80 per cent of a 10-year moving average. That

[Mr. Howard.]