

Supply—Agriculture

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): Yes; the actual figure in the current fiscal year up to February 20, was \$712,000, as I intimated earlier. The figure of revenue for the fiscal year 1959-60 was \$673,917.

Item agreed to.

664. Agricultural lime assistance, further amount required, \$200,000.

Mr. Hellyer: Would the minister give us what information he has in respect of this item?

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): This is an item of agricultural lime assistance. This is simply an addition of \$200,000 as a further amount required in addition to the sum of \$1,200,000 voted in the main estimates.

This assistance is based on a subsidy not to exceed 60 per cent of the total amount expended by the provinces for any direct activity in increasing lime utilization for soil amendment purposes, such as transportation costs and, in some cases, lime production.

The use of lime in the present fiscal year has extended beyond the sum that was contemplated when the item was written into the main estimates. I am told that the increased use of lime in eastern Canada is attributable to a long, open autumn season.

Item agreed to.

665. Contributions to the governments of the provinces of Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba, in accordance with terms and conditions prescribed by the governor in council, of one half the amounts paid by the governments of those provinces to farmers in respect of their 1959 unharvested crops to a maximum of \$300 in respect of any one farm—further amount required, \$390,000.

Mr. Hellyer: Will the minister give us the details of this vote as well, if he has them before him?

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): This is an item covering contributions to the three prairie provinces in respect of the program of assistance to the farmers in those three provinces in respect of the 1959 unharvested crops. The house previously authorized the payment of 50 per cent of the cost of the emergency unharvested crop costs in those three provinces, and this item is based upon claims filed by the provinces and as yet unpaid and on claims still to be filed by the provinces. The amount in the previous supplementary estimates was \$1,060,000, and this is an addition of \$390,000 thereto.

Item agreed to.

Special—

666. Estimated amount required to recoup the agricultural commodities stabilization account to cover the net operating loss of the agricultural stabilization board as at March 31, 1961, \$69,504,548.

[Mr. Benidickson.]

(Translation):

Mr. Boulanger: Mr. Chairman, I apologize for having spoken a little too soon during consideration of the supplementary estimates of the Department of Agriculture, when I raised the matter of the stabilization of agricultural prices. The fact is that I wanted to put certain questions to the Minister of Finance (Mr. Fleming).

The other day, the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Hamilton) claimed that farmers' increase in income over the past three years resulted from the operation of the Agricultural Stabilization Act. I do not think that claim is quite true.

In order to determine the average net income of farmers for the years 1947 to 1956 inclusive, and compare it with the figures for the years 1957 to 1960 inclusive, I made the calculation and I find that it is \$234 million less per year. In fact, for the ten-year period from 1947 to 1956, the average for all of Canada was \$1,459,000,000, as against \$1,220,200,000 for the years 1957 to 1960, a difference of \$233,800,000.

Could the Minister of Finance indicate whether, in view of the tremendous amounts spent over the past five or six years to stabilize agricultural prices, a bill will be introduced to carry out the pledges that were made to give the farmers parity, not charity.

Could the minister also give us the breakdown of the amount of \$69,504,548 that we are asked to vote under item 666?

(Text):

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): Mr. Chairman, this is a very large item. It is one of two really extraordinarily large items in these final supplementary estimates. This is the estimated amount required to recoup the agricultural commodities stabilization account to cover the net operating loss of the agricultural stabilization board as at March 31, 1961, in the sum of \$69,504,548.

This is an item that arises annually in the final supplementary estimates. That was the practice last year and it was the practice in previous years. It is only when we reach the end of the year, actually, that we know what is going to be the total amount required to recoup the agricultural commodities stabilization account. The practice has been to provide for this recoupment in the final supplementary estimates as close as possible to the end of the fiscal year. Even then it may not be possible to estimate it with absolute precision. We do the best we can in this respect; but from the time the item is made