

Wheat Export Prices

Mr. F. J. Bigg (Pembina): Mr. Speaker, I am glad the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Olson) is here to hear my remarks. I have waited some time for this opportunity. The people in my part of the country think agriculture is of prime importance. Having been in office for one year, the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) has at last discovered western Canada, and we are very pleased.

An hon. Member: What is the question?

Mr. Bigg: I am not asking a question but making a speech and I would appreciate it if hon. members on the government side allow me to continue.

As I said, having been in office for one year, the Prime Minister has discovered western Canada, and we are pleased. Unfortunately, he speaks first and thinks later, as is his custom. His first reaction on discovering western Canada, and being told the government should consider western farmers, was to say that the government could do nothing. That is exactly what I expected him to say, and I am not disappointed. I did not expect this government to aid western farmers. The Speech from the Throne contains the warning that this government will do little, if anything, for the farmers of Canada. The speech of September 12, 1968, shows that the western farmer can expect little help.

Because the government established the Grains Council everybody hoped western Canada would benefit. I have been patient in my hope that western agriculture would be aided—notwithstanding this administration's record of not helping farmers. Of course, nothing happened. It has been most difficult to get questions answered in the house. When we have received answers they have been offhand answers or non-answers, so to speak. No sooner had we completed the throne speech debate than I drew to the minister's attention serious difficulties in western Canada involving damp grain. Western farmers suffered because their grain was damp. Any grain that had been harvested had not been dried, and any government action had come too late. There was too little of it, and what there was came too late. And what happened, Mr. Speaker. The Prime Minister went to western Canada and said, "The government can do nothing more." Well, the government could do much more; the Minister of Agriculture could do a tremendous amount of good, particularly on the prairies. As I say, I am not disappointed in what has happened. I am a westerner and for one year I waited patiently for the government to act. For one

[The Acting Speaker (Mr. Béchard).]

year I hoped that the government would answer my questions which touch intimately the bread and butter of thousands and thousands of people.

Of course, nothing has been done because, since 1963, this government has pursued an entirely wrong course in Canadian agriculture from coast to coast. They wanted farms to grow bigger and bigger, and they wanted small farmers to get out of farming. The government boasts about the bigness of all sorts of farm loans. Not long ago the Minister of Agriculture spent half an hour telling us how many millions of dollars had been advanced to the farmers of Canada. I hope he is not serious when he says that he is injecting money into the farm economy, because how in the world can you inject money into the farm economy when farmers have to repay debts. In some cases it is impossible for farmers to pay back money they have borrowed. Farmers do not want to borrow; I know perfectly well they want to stand on their own feet.

This government, Mr. Speaker, wants to nationalize all land in Canada. That is its policy. That is why it wants proposed rule 75c, and I shall remain in Ottawa all summer to make sure that the rule is not adopted. The government wants to nationalize all the farms of western Canada, and I for one will not permit it to do so. I do not think the people of western Canada will be bamboozled by an itinerant prime minister. Let him use his charisma in the chain stores of the nation. He may use his charisma on 13 year old girls and in the shopping centres, he may wear different flowers in his buttonhole each day, but I say to him the people of western Canada are tired of this. They are tired of the flower show; now, they want the grain show to begin.

If the Prime Minister has charisma, let him use it in Washington on his United States friends. Let him stop quoting Mao and begin quoting Mr. Nixon. The United States will buy our products; that country is competing with us in world markets. It is Mr. Nixon who will help us to set up a food bank, do research, make better use of our resources and, in the end, help us to sell our grain. Why do I say that, Mr. Speaker? I say it because in this world hundreds of millions of people go to bed every night hungry and Canada and the United States will help to feed them. The manner of our payment will have to be settled by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Benson) and the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce.