

He talked about those things that are tremendously important in the field of agriculture, and particularly about grains policy. The result of the international meetings in the field of grains policy has led to a much more satisfactory climate on the selling side, and this is evident in that international market today. I will have more to say about this in a minute.

I listened very attentively to the hon. member for Kamouraska (Mr. Dionne). I think he tried to outline some of the problems facing farmers and tried to suggest that these problems could not be solved by consolidating farms. I suggest to him that perhaps he ought to consult with the hon. member for Bellechasse (Mr. Lambert) who sits behind him. He will learn that the great problem of poverty and low incomes in agriculture in most parts of Canada today is directly related to the advance of technology. Far units must become economic units if they are to stay competitive in the production of those commodities; and, therefore, we are doing agriculture a service by providing policies that may lead to the kind of consolidation that will transform farms into economic units.

Regardless of all the weeping and wailing that may go on from time to time with regard to the overproduction of food in some areas, and the underconsumption or lack of food affecting people in other parts of the world, the fact is that all farmers must live with the market place. This is the place from which they derive their income. That is where they obtain their gross receipts with which they must pay their operating costs and from which they derive their net income. May I say that the total amount laid out by the Canadian treasury at present for food aid and other international programs is many, many times what it was before this government came to office. The outlay for food outlay alone will approach perhaps close to \$100 million in this year. We have gone almost as far as we can without upsetting markets, etc., in the recipient countries. I know of no case where a government has made a request to us under the rules that are usually respected in the international field with regard to gifts of food aid where this government has not responded and provided whatever we had to meet that request. I repeat that farmers have to live with the supply and marketing conditions within our area. They must not produce more than the effective market can absorb, notwithstanding the fact that there may be people somewhere in the world who can use this food. We have to bear in mind that it is cash receipts that are important to the well-being of farmers in Canada.

• (4:30 p.m.)

I now wish to deal specifically with our agricultural policy. The motion claims that serious damage to rural communities and to farmers was brought about by the failure of the present government to provide adequate agricultural policies. Any objective member of this House who wants to use even a little integrity and honesty in his assertions will agree there is probably more agricultural policy, leadership and new departures in coming to grips with the fundamental problems in agriculture before the farmers, the country and this Parliament than at any other time in recent history.

23966—3½

Economic Conditions in Rural Communities

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Olson: I think that the proposals we have made, the meetings we have had, the great agricultural congresses which have been endorsed by the agricultural community have been successful in having the kind of discussion that the farmers want to have and, as well as other means of consultation, have led to the evolution of policies for the general improvement of the agricultural community.

In addition, for the first time in the history of the Canadian Parliament, all of the agriculture bills have gone to the Standing Committee on Agriculture. The committee can call witnesses and listen to opinions of farm organizations during the process of passing these bills. I think it is fair to say that in almost every case very important amendments have been made to these bills based on the representations of the farm organizations. I suggest that the kind of assertion in the motion at this time is not in keeping with the facts.

Mr. Yewchuk: Will the minister permit a question?

Mr. Olson: I wonder if hon. members could hold their questions until the end of my speech. I only have 30 minutes. I have so many things to say that I am afraid I might not get them all into that 30 minute period. If there is time at the end of my speech, I will be very happy to answer the hon. member's question and other questions.

I think that the Department of Agriculture, the Department of Industry, Trade and Commerce and other departments are spending a greater portion of their time than ever before on the marketing aspects of agricultural products, both in the domestic and international field. I think that is a proper attitude and change of emphasis. I say that because I realize that our production technology has advanced to the point where Canadian farmers are capable of overproducing almost any commodity when they set out to produce to their maximum capability. What is more important, they can overproduce all commodities at the same time. The technology and know-how that our farmers possess today enables them to produce so much more in relation to a few years ago that we now have to turn the emphasis on finding better ways and means of having orderly production and marketing rather than constantly producing against the depressed prices that surpluses create.

I suggest that Bill C-176 is one step in the program of coming to grips with the basic structural requirements by way of amendments to policies and programs that will lead us there. From time to time temporary action has to be taken until the organizations are functioning well under the authority of Bill C-176. Occasionally this has been done under the authority of the Agricultural Stabilization Act. During the past few months we have taken action on such things as potatoes, apples and broilers under the Agricultural Stabilization Act. We have also taken action on corn under another authority. We will continue to do this when we find a particular sector or commodity within the industry in difficulty. Farmers and provincial governments agree that there is now a deficit in the total