

system for granting compensated discounts in order to bring prices down. By so doing, and through other means, such as reducing interest rates and eliminating taxes on building materials for farmers, we could contribute to bringing down the price of food.

If we brought those prices down, the farmer could sell more products and be less dependent on foreign markets, as other producers in our economy would be. We are seeking all kinds of ways of exporting our products while doing everything to prevent Canadians from purchasing more by burdening them with taxes and excessive interest rates.

Mr. Chairman, how can we find real solutions to this problem when we act in an unthinkable way, against all sense? Common sense requires to reduce interest rates and enable our citizens to buy more by pushing prices down. Yet prices are going up in every field, including that of grain movement; this is the reason why farmers have become unable to make both ends meet and they have gone deeply into debt.

This is why they borrow money. Interest rates, one could argue, are reasonable, but a rate of 8 or 9 per cent is too high for a farmer. It should not exceed 3 per cent.

We shall never settle problems related to agriculture by taking all kinds of measures designed to increase the prices of products; we should rather find other means in order to reduce them.

A moment ago, the hon. member for Crowfoot said that Canadian farm production is not balanced with the U.S. production. He stated that we are unable to produce as cheaply as the Americans do, that there is a difference between prices of American and Canadian products. The American legislation is a little more helpful, a little more human than the Canadian legislation in the area of agriculture. I met some U.S. farmers who borrow all the capital they need at an interest rate of 5 per cent; those American farmers do not pay any tax as long as they work on their farm. This is a system which does not exist in Canada, where farmers must pay taxes just as other citizens and they cannot make ends meet.

This is why there are so many problems in agriculture as in other areas of the economy. People cannot operate their farm on a profitable basis any more, excepted larger organizations. Those can finally survive but the ordinary owner of a family operation cannot make ends meet.

So, if we want agriculture to be more prosperous, we will have to find mechanisms other than the traditional ones. We cannot seem to find any logical formula to really stimulate agriculture. Yet the incentive formula is always the same: we have to try to find ways to lower prices through the granting of compensated discounts, the lowering of interest rates, through allowing the purchase of cheap machinery and eliminating taxes on building materials and on all kinds of goods.

That is a way, Mr. Chairman, to stimulate agriculture for the greater prosperity of Canadians.

[English]

Mr. Lang: Mr. Chairman, I wish to make a short intervention on this item. When the hon. member for Saskatoon-Biggar was speaking, he said he was dealing

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specifically with two areas. I also wish to touch on those two areas. I regret that the hon. member is not here at the moment. In the latter stages of his remarks the hon. member said that he wondered what our position was with regard to the marketing of rapeseed and whether rapeseed should be handled by the Canadian Wheat Board. He said something about my having made some vague utterance on this question.

We have been anything but vague. We have taken the position that it is up to the producers to decide this issue. In our discussions with producers we have followed their advice that a significant amount of information is needed about the marketing system, the open market, a pooled market, Wheat Board marketing, and that this must be in the producers' hands before they can make a sensible decision about which kind of marketing they want. It is our position that it is up to the producers to decide.

I know that the hon. member for Saskatoon-Biggar comes from a party which on the provincial side in Saskatchewan seems to take the view that it ought to decide when producers should have a marketing board, whether the producers want one or not, and goes ahead with marketing boards without consulting producers and imposes upon them a particular solution. That is in keeping with the basic NDP philosophy that the experts, that is to say themselves, ought to tell producers and everyone else what to do, and they will be better off for having been told.

I think that the hon. member for Saskatoon-Biggar is quite right in wondering about the Conservative position on this issue. He stated he would like to give them five minutes in which to present their views. I think it would be more workable if he were to invite five or six of them to state their five or six views on this issue, since usually their position on agricultural questions varies from one part of the country to another; they have no consensus. Luckily, they have not so far needed to reach a consensus on any of these issues.

• (1740)

If the hon. member for Saskatoon-Biggar has missed our position, or found it vague, let me state it for him once again very clearly. We will not impose producer marketing boards upon the producers of rapeseed, but we are prepared to offer them this type of marketing should they choose it. We have waited until they themselves are able to say that the information has been in their hands long enough to enable appropriate consultations to be held. I should like to repeat what I have said to some producer organizations and their representatives in the last few weeks: I believe the time is now ripe for us to take that next step and consult producers about the kind of marketing they want.

The member for Saskatoon-Biggar referred to price differentials which can exist under the present system. He referred to farmers who sell at a lower price at one period of the year and who then find that their neighbours are selling at a different price in another period of the year. This, of course, is one of the annoyances which will lead some producers to opt for board marketing, which will lead some producers to choose to get out of the business of speculating directly on the rapeseed market; they wish