

*Supply*

caused partly by weather. Fifteen per cent of the winter wheat crop did not come through the winter in very good condition; 15 per cent of it is a wipeout. These producers have to make a decision over the next three or four days as to whether they rip that up and plant an alternative crop, or whether they leave it in hopes of getting some returns, although meagre, from that wheat that was killed over the winter months.

Is the minister to look at this to see if he can speed up the process? Hopefully, he will do that this week. Those producers have to make a decision whether they are going to rip it up in the next few days and plant soybeans, white beans, or one of the other edible bean crops. It has to be a crop that will accept a late planting.

In a letter dated May 16, the Prime Minister has been called upon by the Ontario Wheat Producers Marketing Board to act immediately to make this known. While we realize that the initial payments announced last week apply to western Canadian wheat and the Canadian Wheat Board, this one is administered by the Agricultural Co-operatives Marketing Act. I think it is only fair that the government announce, as soon as possible, what that initial payment is going to be so that farmers can produce their cash flow projections, make their planting intentions immediately and put in those alternative crops.

I also think that the government should be looking a little harder at what it has done and maybe eat a little humble pie and return to looking at the two-price wheat system because the Ontario producers offered to accept a cap on the amount of wheat they would produce that goes into the domestic market. If that cap was accepted by the Ontario producers and they took the export market price for the rest of it, this alone would be a benefit to the farmers of Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Alberta, and Lord knows they need all the help they can get at this time.

I am very disappointed and frustrated about this. I think I should remind the minister of a speech made in this House, when he said: "Whereas the economic problems facing Canadian farmers today are largely the result of government inaction and neglect", and I am sure we all agree with that, "this House condemns the government for its failure to recognize the importance of this agriculture sector and its contribution to the economic growth in Canada, and urges the government to

move quickly to expedite to reduce the farm fuel tax", I say that it should be removed altogether, "reduce the red meat stabilization uncertainties, but to introduce the red meat plan and expedite the passage of legislation respecting advance payments and resist the erosion of initial payments to western grain".

That is an interesting statement and I wholeheartedly concur with it today in this House. It was made on May 13, 1984, by none other than the Minister of State for Grains and Oilseeds. If he thought conditions were bad then, they have deteriorated far more.

A few days ago, the Farm Debt Review Board was in front of the agriculture committee of the House of Commons. One of the provincial chairmen pointed out to us that the equity in the farm sector across Canada has seen a continual erosion over the last five years.

I have no idea of the political persuasion of that hon. gentleman, but I know that he was absolutely right when he pointed that out. He is a very astute Canadian. The government should pay attention to the erosion of equity. That is why we are seeing all the foreclosures in western Canada at the present time and why we are seeing the financial institutions as the largest landholders in the province of Saskatchewan, landholders of land that was once owned and operated by the family farmers, their wives and their children. It is a terrible legacy to leave those people, a terrible legacy to leave to all Canadians.

I also want to point out that this afternoon we met with the Dairy Farmers of Canada and the Ontario Milk Marketing Board in the agriculture committee. There is a level of uncertainty there about what is going to happen to that industry over the next few years. One of the statements in committee was that they feel very apprehensive about the fact that they may be being traded off against other interests in Canada, interests that are closely tied to the export markets. These are markets that do not have the level of stability that the dairy industry or the poultry industry has here in Canada. The producers who belong to those industries certainly have a right to some stability and assurances that those industries will continue to prosper the way that they were intended when those plans were set up by the Government of Canada under Liberal administrations. I would like to extend that to include the Canadian Wheat Board which was established many years ago under the