

*Supply*

One of the recommendations in the pesticide registration review deals with price monitoring. Work in this area has been fast tracked to ensure producers are not left at a competitive disadvantage with their U.S. counterparts.

The government also wants to put more emphasis on research projects aimed at lowering production costs. The GST is already lowering those costs, a fact that will become more apparent as farmers start making their purchases for spring planting.

The third line of this three-part safety net strategy deals with income situations that cannot be adequately addressed by effective management or programs like GRIP and NISA. A national horticultural safety nets committee is in place and is dealing with issues that span the three lines of defence. It is studying ways to enhance the long-term income stability of the industry and will submit its recommendations to federal and provincial ministers when they have their annual meeting in Alberta in July of this year.

The federal government is also working closely with the Government of British Columbia, the Okanagan Tree Fruit Authority and the B.C. Fruit Growers Association to look at what needs to be done to revitalize the tree fruit industry.

We also plan to work closely with the province of Ontario and its tender fruit growers in looking at long-term solutions to some problems affecting that industry.

In conclusion, clearly this government is concerned about the well-being of Canada's horticulture industry. We are taking the steps necessary to ensure its health and well-being in both the short term and the long term. By working in partnership with the industry, we are taking the action necessary to build a vibrant, durable horticultural sector for this decade and the 21st century.

**Mr. Len Taylor (The Battlefords—Meadow Lake):** Mr. Speaker, I listened to the speech of the hon. member opposite with a great deal of interest. I recognize that he has some personal interest in the horticultural sector. I applaud him for that because it is an important part of the agricultural sector.

The main part of the motion put forward today dealt with the government coming up with the required assistance in time for spring seeding this year. One of the

things the finance minister, in his February budget suggested, was that there would be additional spending, \$1.3 billion in additional funds provided for farmers in need.

In Saskatchewan where I come from, there are a large number of farmers in need, mostly grain producers. I realize the member opposite understands the grain sector as well as the horticultural sector. We have farmers in need who are looking for that \$1.3 billion in funding that the finance minister has identified as money necessary right now for spring seeding.

The prairie pools have indicated that if we just take current market conditions, at least \$1 billion is necessary in order to ensure that the farmers on the land in western Canada will have enough money to put their seed in the ground and harvest a crop.

The other part of it is the economics, the massive debt that exists in the agricultural sector: \$22 billion now exists as the accumulated debt.

I would like to ask the hon. member opposite two questions. We have a massive debt on the prairies and a great need for immediate money, immediate funding. Would the hon. member agree that the money in the budget, \$1.3 billion in additional spending, should be earmarked for spring seeding funding for grain producers on the prairies? Would he see an opportunity for the government to put in place a special interest program for farmers who are holding that \$22 billion debt in the agricultural sector?

**Mr. O'Kurley:** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member identified a problem that is certainly an important issue in the region of western Canada, and in particular in prairies ridings where agriculture is an important pillar in their economies, as it is in Elk Island.

As the member from Saskatchewan pointed out, our agricultural sector is experiencing some very difficult times. Those difficulties are to a large extent created by the subsidy trade war between the European Economic Community and the Americans. Certainly it is important that the federal government play a role in addressing that very important difficulty.

The program that was set out by the federal government was a program to include the producers, provincial governments, as well as the federal government. It was also suggested with regard to immediate assistance prior to seeding that any assistance or any type of program