

*Supply*

its commitment to providing assistance for that shortfall in the past crop year.

That is what the rallies are all about and that is what the rallies will continue to be about. There will be rallies across this country until the government moves. I personally hope that the government will move before there are violent confrontations or other actions which are totally destructive and harmful.

Therefore, the issue here today is really about a promise made. I recall those great lines of Robert W. Service: "A promise made is a debt unpaid and the north has its own stern code".

I believe if the government does not meet the commitment it made to Canadian farmers last spring, the north will have its own stern code. It is up to the government to provide the special financial assistance. It is not all the federal government; it is clearly a responsibility of provincial governments.

There have been various mechanisms suggested. A few days after our agriculture committee meeting in which we said that there had to be special financial assistance over and above the GRIP program, the minister's own advisory committee met in Winnipeg. It put forward a proposal saying there had to be special funding, that it did not want to destroy the GRIP, and that it wanted to have that special financial assistance provided now.

The assistance that is going to be provided in this coming crop year can be done under GRIP, the Gross Revenue Insurance Program, rather than for this coming year.

One of the proposals it suggested, the third line of defence committee in Winnipeg, was in terms of the NISA program, the Net Income Stabilization Account program which was being used, that the provinces could opt in fully for 1990-91 and that program could be doubled. That would be a mechanism. It suggested that since the mechanism was in place, they should do that.

I have already suggested to the hon. member for Mackenzie that in the Ontario region it is essential that Ontario come forward. One mechanism it can do to help in that situation would be to opt in to the NISA program.

The Ontario Federation of Agriculture and four other farm groups in Ontario held a press conference yesterday. They talked about "no support, no farmers, no food". This is the logo of those five groups. They see the shortfall over and above what has been proposed under NISA as \$124 million. They talk about the dire consequences if this shortfall is not met by government. They talk about having to get this situation fixed quickly and the effect on farm losses being felt right across the province. There are a lot of individuals and businesses that make a living from agriculture and the food sector and their livelihood is also at stake.

This is more than fulfilling a commitment for the 1990-91 crop year. Clearly, the issue is spelled out. The need is really desperate.

It is interesting that not only have government members supported the resolution, but they have spoken out about the dire consequences of lack of action this fall on this special funding.

The Minister of Agriculture, in his responses in the House on Monday of this week, used the old smoke and mirrors approach by saying: "We do not want to talk about this whole business of shortfall, the third line of defence and all that. We are going to be making an interim payment under GRIP", much of which will be used up by the premiums that the farmers have to pay.

The figure he quoted was \$406 million. It is interesting that that is in the same ballpark as the \$350 million premium that farmers will have to pay under the GRIP program.

I think it is important to remember that the need for GRIP, NISA and third line of defence really comes from the international trade war. We have never seen anything like it. Grain and wheat are at \$2 a bushel. In real terms, they tell me that it is lower than it was in the 1930s. It just calls attention to the international trade war where some 300 billion in American dollars are being wagered or fought back and forth. It is probably one of the most expensive and most damaging trade wars in history.

Of course it is only one-third of the trillion dollars that is spent on arms, but for Canadian farmers it is a total disaster. They cannot meet their bills with \$2 wheat in 1991.