

*Business of Supply*

suggest that the facet of the Canadian economy which we are now discussing should at once be treated at least as fairly as other facets. Other countries show more respect for our grain.

May I also remind the minister that there is in the world less wheat on hand than there was one year ago, and much less than there was ten years ago. There is on hand only enough wheat for one year's supply. There is not a glut in any way, shape or form when you have only one year's supply. A drought in Canada or in any of the great wheat supplying countries would change this picture. But we are told to cut down, cut down, cut down on wheat production. We are cutting down; we cannot get rid of our wheat. The minister should be cognizant of the fact that there is only one year's supply of wheat in the world, and he should be careful. We do not have to do the cutting down, because mother nature can do that very well.

Other countries in the world are looking at Canadian agriculture, even though our own government does not seem to be interested in it. The Japanese government has entered into a direct contract with growers for delivery to Japan of a rapeseed crop to be grown on hundreds of thousands of acres in Canada. It seems that other countries realize our potential and our own government does not. The government's attitude just does not add up.

When the Minister of Agriculture spoke in Chatham he reminded the people that there is one good thing in this situation: the consumer has been the major beneficiary. That is only a smokescreen put out by this government. To say that the consumer is the beneficiary, when the cost of living is higher than it has ever been, when interest rates and unemployment have never been higher, is nonsense.

How can a member of this government go around making fatuous statements like that? I am sure he was putting up a smokescreen because he wanted to divert people's attention from the real problem which he hates to face. He is a farmer and rancher; therefore, I cannot understand why he should be talking about these so-called guidelines and flexible programs. I agree with him that we should be flexible in our approach to agriculture, but where is the flexibility? There is absolutely none. A moment ago I told hon. members that it is nearly a year since we had a quota on our farm. Where, then, is the government's flexibility?

Several hon. members said this afternoon that space for grain is available at the Lake-

head. The minister said, "Why do you not tell farmers what a good, efficient job we are doing? We want to get this space filled by April or May". I ask, why not fill it now? What would be the difference? Action such as this would make a difference to people who have not had a quota for a long time, who have no money in their pockets and who are paying, and have been paying for two or three years, ridiculously high rates of interest.

There ought to be another name for interest rates like that, because no one in agriculture or industry who has to find money under these conditions can look forward to making any kind of profit. I ask, why not fill the storage facilities now? Why must the government be what it considers orderly and efficient in this regard? The minister may call it flexibility, but it is no such thing. The government cannot even move a few loads of rapeseed to the coast and get them shipped to overseas customers. That is how flexible it is.

What else could we do? We could change our system of grading, because that is long overdue, and bring in a system that would encompass the protein content of wheat. This system is being used by buyers, particularly high class buyers such as millers and distillers as well as many of our overseas customers. I think they know more about our crops than the government does. They know what regions produce wheats containing large amounts of protein.

I point out that millers and distillers in particular consider wheat with high-protein content much more valuable than wheat with low-protein content. If we could introduce a new grading system along these lines, we might be able to introduce a two-price system on the domestic scene and, in addition, charge two different prices to export customers who would be quite willing to pay more for high-protein wheat. I will leave these thoughts with the minister; I suppose he will have to read them, because he is not listening to my remarks.

What can we do immediately? I strongly advocate that we immediately pay farmers for on-farm stored grain. If we paid for grain in storage that way, it would mean that farmers would receive about 18 per cent of the value of their crop, which would just about equal the interest which they pay on loans. I believe this would help our farmers, and we could do it immediately. We should do it if we are serious about giving to our agricultural sector the consideration that we give to other facets of our economy.