

*Supply*

[Translation]

**QUESTION PASSED AS ORDER FOR RETURN**

**Mr. D. M. Collenette (Parliamentary Secretary to President of the Privy Council):** Madam Speaker, if question No. 42 could be made an order for return, the return would be tabled immediately.

[Text]

PRIME MINISTER—CABINET MINISTERS—AMOUNT SPENT FOR FURNITURE

**Question No. 42—Mr. Cossitt:**

1. Between April 20, 1968 and May 22, 1979, what was the total amount spent, contracted for or authorized for furniture, equipment or appurtenances ordered by the government for the offices of cabinet ministers including the Prime Minister?

2. Of the various ministers involved, what were the top four in order of expenditures and what were the total expenditures in each case for any portfolios that such individuals held?

Return tabled.

[Translation]

**Mr. Collenette:** I ask that the remaining questions be allowed to stand.

**Madam Speaker:** Is it agreed?

**Some hon. Members:** Agreed.

**Madam Speaker:** Pursuant to Standing Order 54, I do now leave the chair for the House to go into Committee of the Whole.

**GOVERNMENT ORDERS**

[English]

**BUSINESS OF SUPPLY**

APPROPRIATION ACT NO. 2, 1980-81

The House resumed, from Monday, December 8, consideration in committee of Bill C-47, for granting to Her Majesty certain sums of money for the Government of Canada for the financial year ending March 31, 1981—Mr. Pinard—Mr. Francis in the chair.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Vote No. 1

**Mr. Whelan:** Mr. Chairman and hon. members, I welcome this opportunity of reviewing with you the spending estimates of Agriculture Canada. My department's activities touch the lives of all Canadians every day and so I am glad that you and I will have the chance to explore in the public eye just what Agriculture Canada is doing to assist our basic agricultural

industry and also to safeguard the health, and the pocket-books, of Canadian consumers.

I believe these next couple of days will serve to highlight the tremendous importance that the agri-food industry will continue to have in the development of our great country.

In this context I want you to realize that Agriculture Canada operates with only 1.3 per cent of the total federal budget. Mr. Chairman, that is something that a lot of people do not understand. When asked how much money is spent on Agriculture Canada by the federal government, a lot of people who one would think would know better, estimate anywhere from 30 per cent to 20 per cent, or 12 per cent. But, Mr. Chairman, only 1.3 per cent of the total federal budget is spent on Agriculture Canada and, Mr. Chairman and members of this committee, we run the best ship of all and take second place to no one! That amount is extremely modest considering the benefits agriculture brings to all Canadians.

I would like to pause for a moment to consider the record of achievement of the Canadian farmer who has always faced a multitude of hardships and challenges. Consider the geographic and climatic adversities, where less than 10 per cent of our 2,272 million acres of land can be farmed.

Fully two-thirds of Canada cannot be used for any commercial agriculture due to climate and soil limitations. And of the remaining one-third, most is limited by too much moisture, rockiness or steepness. There are only about 200 million acres of potentially usable land and to date we have developed about 174 million acres. But really less than 24 million acres out of the total is top class land in the climatically favoured areas. In short, the Canadian farmer has had to do much more with less than his counterpart in many other countries.

We have about 3 per cent of the world's farmland and yet we are producing a sizeable percentage of the world's food—up to 6 per cent of the world's wheat and barley; 12 per cent of the world's oats, and 2 per cent of the world's meat and milk products.

Not only are the Canadian farmer's outstanding achievements heralded on the world's stage, but the accomplishments at home are just as remarkable. For example, between the years 1975 and 1978 the productivity of the Canadian farmer was almost twice that of the labour productivity of other industrial sectors. As a matter of fact, if you go back even further, 20 years ago each of our farmers was producing enough food to feed less than 30 people, and now the Canadian farmer can produce enough food to feed more than 55 people. And, what is more, it is estimated that by the year 2000 one Canadian farmer will be feeding nearly 200 people. If you travel from coast to coast, you will find that the average Canadian farmer produces nearly \$3,000 worth of food more than his counterpart in the United States. In my opinion, the work of the Canadian farmer is second to none and that is a fact that I feel, from time to time, we do not pay enough heed to.

Right now, one out of every four Canadians works in a food-related job, from production to processing to transporta-