

Supply

munities and to the people who want to live and retire in those communities.

The government should follow that commitment with some policies that have some teeth in them. First of all, through the Farm Credit Corporation, they should be providing loans at lower interest rates.

We are not asking for this commitment for all farms. As I and other members of the party have said, taking western Canada as an example, if you want to farm 10 sections, 15 sections or 50 sections of land, go ahead and farm it, but do not expect the government to assist you. However, we would like to see some assistance provided up to the level of a viable family farm. There should be lower interest rates for that. It should be universal up to a maximum amount.

Taking into account the high input costs that farmers suffer, there should be a commitment to lower costs. There has to be alternatives to chemicals. Biotechnology is very important and there should be money for research and development, which is a whole other speech on what this government has and has not committed to.

While the government is putting money into research and development for biotechnology, there should be a lower price for chemicals. The patent that these chemical companies have on chemicals is really outrageous. It is a licence to print money. There is no need for that type of legislation. It certainly hurts the farmer when he or she is putting in the crops.

• (1520)

We have also said that there should be a minimum price on grain. Not open-ended, but to a maximum. We said in 1988, 8,000 bushels. That would be approximately what it should be, 8,000 to 10,000 bushels, a maximum perhaps geared on the U.S. target price. For spring wheat, I believe that would be something in the area of \$5 a bushel. There should also be an option for the producer to buy an insurance policy to ensure a further 8,000 or 10,000 bushels.

Then the producer could sit down in the spring, make a budget and know what he or she is going to grow and what he or she is going to receive for that crop. If they grow that number of bushels, they are going to receive the price for that grain.

I have talked to farmers in the area who have said: "I know I need another granary. I need another facility here. But I do not dare buy it because I do not know what is going to happen with any of the support programs. Those things come out helter-skelter at odd times so I have no way of planning". I have been told that by a number of farmers.

This is a logical approach which would help the family farm maintain itself.

There should also be a commitment to the Canadian Wheat Board. This government is slowly chipping away its mandate. Oats were removed, despite what the government said. There was no consultation with those producers who really counted. A poll came out and while I forget the exact figures, close to 70 or 80 per cent of the producers in western Canada said they would like to see oats remain under the Wheat Board. All the producers were asking to have a vote on the matter. The Canadian Wheat Board is a body that functions on behalf of the producers, by the producers for the producers. The least this government could have done was give the producers that option. The government talks about consultation. Well, it should have consulted with the very people who use the Canadian Wheat Board. There have been those kinds of votes in the past.

It is the same thing with canola. Canola is now a rising product. I know the Minister of Grains and Oilseeds has appointed a committee to look into that area and will be reporting back. But one of the things that should be suggested is the possibility of putting canola under the Wheat Board. If the Wheat Board had control of the sale of canola, it would open up markets, because it can garner large amounts of canola, if it is under the board's jurisdiction, to sell to corporations in the States that are looking for a guaranteed supply and right now they cannot find it. In fact, it is a very good opportunity for the Canadian Wheat Board. It is a very good opportunity for the western producer.

These are some of the things that this government can do. What we need is a short-term solution and a long-term commitment. The short-term solution is to provide the \$500 million, and put it out where it can do some good. Instead of sitting on it, the government should be utilizing it.

The argument that the Minister of Agriculture has made many times is that he cannot give the money out