

Adjournment Debate

the port it should be which will enable grain to be moved cheaply and quickly from the prairie provinces.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Rose: Mr. Chairman, in the dying moments of the evening I should just like to say that I represent a riding typical of Canada's relationship to agriculture, a riding where agriculture is declining. The hon. member for Bruce, who is always entertaining when he speaks, has long experience both with the government of Ontario and in this House. I remember one occasion when he said that one of his main aims was to help the farmers, but he admitted that the farmers were actually worse off than they had been when he was first elected 20 years ago. Nevertheless, tonight he proposed all sorts of things and asked, "Who sells the most wheat?"

Mr. Chairman, if there is a market for wheat, any government can sell it; it does not have to be the minister from Saskatoon-Humboldt who is the super salesman, or the member for Qu'Appelle-Moose Mountain. World demand sells wheat whether the minister represents one of the old-line parties or the other.

In response to the hon. member for Churchill who spoke on the need for increased use of that port and the need to keep it open for 107 days, I would suggest to him that the Minister of Transport is in enough hot water to keep the port of Churchill ice-free the year around.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Rose: Mr. Chairman, there are a number of problems relating to my riding that would bear greater examination than is possible in the 30 or 40 seconds remaining, so with your permission I shall call it ten o'clock.

The Assistant Deputy Chairman: Is it agreed that we call it ten o'clock?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Progress reported.

PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 40 deemed to have been moved.

**AGRICULTURE—INCREASE IN PRICE OF FERTILIZER—
INQUIRY AS TO ACTION**

Mr. Bill Knight (Assiniboia): Mr. Speaker, on January 15, 1973, I asked the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Whelan) the following question:

• (2200)

As great concern has been expressed by a number of farm organizations in the past as well as at present over the increase in the price of fertilizer for the farming industry, and as fertilizer plants suggest that the increase results from a lack of potash and other

[Mr. Taylor.]

ingredients which are in over-supply in Saskatchewan, can the minister inform us whether there will be action on this matter?

In asking that question I was dealing with a subject that historically has long been of concern to the western producer and, as I am sure the Minister of Agriculture knows, to the eastern producer as well. For example, in the Peace River country the price of certain types of fertilizer—without going into details—was \$34 per ton in 1972. By January, 1973, the price had risen to \$46 per ton, an increase of \$12 per ton. In the month of January alone there were two increases of \$5 each in the price of fertilizer.

In addition to that rapid increase in price, the suppliers of fertilizer in the Peace River country claim that there is a shortage of fertilizer to meet the needs of the Canadian market. At the same time some suppliers have been exporting fertilizer. We have had experience with such exports before. The Minister of Agriculture may not be aware of these instances. For example, the Cominco Company of Trail, British Columbia, exported fertilizer to North Dakota, U.S.A. At the same time, Canadian farmers could cross the border and obtain fertilizer at prices lower than those obtaining on the Canadian market. After it was learned that the farmer, as usual, was smart enough to do this, the rules and regulations were changed and the price on the American side of the border went up as well.

What I am trying to get across to the minister is that we need a better answer than the one he gave when he said, as reported at page 277 of *Hansard*:

Mr. Speaker, this has been reported to me. What the hon. member says is true, according to the representations which have been made to me, namely, that because of so-called shortages of nitrogen and potash it is proposed to increase prices. We are investigating this. We are contacting the premier of Saskatchewan to find out if it is true that there is a shortage of potash in Saskatchewan and investigating the other chemical companies that are responsible for the manufacture of nitrogen.

May I point out that in Saskatchewan, as I am sure the minister in charge of the Wheat Board knows, we have more potash than we need or will need for a long, long time. This is something fertilizer suppliers can take into consideration. I appreciate the minister's answer. It is at least better than the sort of answer we used to obtain from the former minister, and I make no bones about it.

This evening perhaps he will take the opportunity to tell these producers in our country that they have no business increasing the price of fertilizer because at the same time the price of fuel oil for farms in Saskatchewan jumped by 2 cents a gallon, adding at least \$400 or \$500 to production costs for the next year. Tonight perhaps the minister will not only talk on this matter but will outline some proposals for action.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Chair recognizes the hon. parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Knight: Mr. Speaker, I see the minister is chicken.

[Translation]

Mr. Léopold Corriveau (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to reply to the hon. member for Assiniboia (Mr. Knight) who