

out. There is no more money until April. The hon. member opposite can phone his Farm Credit Corporation and ask. I phoned, and there is no money until April 1, and that is it.

Farm Credit Corporation arrears are \$53 million. I defy the hon. member to criticize me on that point. Do you know why farmers are not paying off their farm credit mortgage loans, Mr. Speaker? They are paying off their bank loans instead. They have demand loans at the bank with interest even over 20 per cent. The farmer says that he does not mind going into arrears with the Farm Credit Corporation but that he would rather get rid of his demand note. The minister has the gall to stand up in the House and say the answer is the Farm Credit Corporation. That is absurd. He went on to say that farm organizations should be helping these producers. I never heard of short-term working capital being supplied by marketing boards. I do not know what marketing board that is. I know a little bit about marketing boards because I have good members of marketing boards in my riding.

If the Minister of Agriculture is using high interest rates to railroad cattle producers into going into a marketing board, he has to be out of his mind. The essence of a marketing board is that producers want it and producers manage it. That has always been the hallmark of a farm marketing board. I have never heard a minister of agriculture say he was going to permit high interest rates which would destroy the farmers unless they formed a marketing board. I say that is the worst possible thing, and as my hon. friend has pointed out, that is blackmail.

I repeated my question to the minister. I was annoyed and I did not put it very politely, but I thought I would give him an opportunity to indicate that there is something on the horizon. I did not expect a detailed program of relief. I expected him to say that they were considering it in the same envelope as assistance to small business or considering changing Farm Credit Corporation policy to provide working capital instead of long-term capital or we were using farm improvement loans, or something. I did not want the t's crossed and the i's dotted. I just wanted him to indicate that that government and that cabinet in which apparently he has no influence were considering something. There was absolutely nothing.

To the second question he pointed out that they were giving interest-free loans for the storage of crops such as soya beans. He went on to say that turkey producers were making money selling utility turkeys at 79 cents a pound. If they are, that is great. I have turkey producers in my riding, and I think that is great. But do you think you are going to stop consumers consuming beef and pork and instead have them consume soya beans and turkeys? We could convert every farm in Perth county to a turkey farm and we could still not supply 1 per cent of the market. So the producer says to Canadian consumers, who may be faced with enormous prices for imported offshore beef, which we cannot supply, to convert to turkeys and soya beans. What kind of nonsense is that? It does not make any sense at all to suggest that Canadian consumers are going to switch from consuming beef and pork to soya beans

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and turkeys. We cannot produce them. We would all starve to death, if that is the only policy of the Minister of Agriculture.

I am getting a little excited again, and I don't mean to. I am sorry, Mr. Speaker. All I want from this government and from the Minister of Agriculture is an answer, because the Minister of Finance is like Turner. I remember Turner in the capital gains debate. I finally said that he could not tell a cow from a cabbage, and he could not. Eventually enough members on this side got up and we finally convinced him to permit that father to son transfer. The Minister of Agriculture did not know anything about it. But for heaven's sake, is there someone on that side who acknowledges that if you take away the vital link in the food chain, the cattlemen and the hog producer, it will be disastrous? The farmers will not be paying for it, it will be the consumers, because the farmers will not produce, despite this dedication to food production which has been demonstrated for decades in Canada. But when the minister has two attacks confronting him, high feed grain prices on the one hand and high interest costs on the other, he can only resist so much pressure. Surely there must be someone, if not among ministers, perhaps members from London-Middlesex or elsewhere, who have good rural constituencies and could tell this government that by putting farmers in a position not to produce, the government will be making the whole situation much, much worse. Unless we have that supply side met, we will have higher prices for imported food bought at a dollar worth 81 cents.

If the dollar goes down another couple of cents, things will just get worse and worse. We talk about those on fixed incomes and the working poor. They are the people who will be the worst hit by this. We have in place a government which has no sensitivity at all to a fact of life. Their lack of policies are driving out the key factor in the food chain cycle and that is the food producer.

Mr. Jesse P. Flis (Parkdale-High Park): Mr. Speaker, I was not going to take part in this debate. I sat here until the wee hours of the morning, but after hearing from hon. members in the New Democratic Party and the Progressive Conservative Party, I felt that the Minister of Finance (Mr. MacEachen) and the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Mr. Lalonde) gave excellent responses. That is why I felt I could not add anything more to the clear statement of government policy. It was a clear statement of short-term objectives and a clear statement of long-term objectives.

I was listening very carefully for constructive suggestions. It is very easy to criticize, but I was listening for constructive suggestions. I can honestly say that I did not hear one constructive suggestion from the other side—

Mr. McDermid: You were not here all night, that is why.

An hon. Member: Back to sleep again.

Mr. Flis: —and I could not sit still any longer.

An hon. Member: Why did you go home at eleven o'clock?