

*Government Orders*

avoid this ever happening again in the future. The situation where losses occur for the grain industry because of a dispute outside their control is not acceptable”.

That was a little over a year ago. He said it was not acceptable, that we had to deal with the west coast port labour dispute and lockout. As we very well know, we had to deal with the issue of the west coast ports again and the rail strike.

• (1140)

When the minister said it was not acceptable, the problem is he realized it was not acceptable but he did not do anything about it. What is really sad is that he had the opportunity to do something about it. He could have supported the hon. member for Lethbridge when he introduced Bill C-262 in the House. It was a votable motion. The Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food could have supported it. It would have legislated final offer arbitration for essential services such as the transport of grain to tidewater from the farm gate. The minister of agriculture recognized the problem was unacceptable. He had the opportunity to do something about it and he failed to do it. That is unacceptable to western grain producers.

With respect to research for agriculture, the minister of agriculture said it is fundamental and needs to rank very high in what we do in the future:

I have not yet had the tough conversation I expect I will have at some point with the Minister of Finance. If you are inconsistent in your research objectives or your research funding you can do a lot of long term damage. I would like to be able to reallocate resources within the department of agriculture should that prove necessary, to make sure that vital things like research do not get fundamentally undermined in the process of reworking the budget. I actually would like to see the situation (funding levels) improved. That may be a bit ambitious in the short run in the face of necessary restraint but the fundamental objective for the long term has to be to increase research and development.

That is from the *Western Producer* of January 27, 1994.

In the budget the minister did not follow through on his commitment. The way I would interpret it is that he was saying: “I do not think I can increase funding for research. I will going have a tough conversation with the Minister of Finance. Certainly we are not going to reduce it”.

What the finance minister did in the last budget was cut funding to agriculture research. He is asking the private sector to make up the difference. Perhaps that is a fair request. We could debate that in the House. The problem is the minister of agriculture said something else. He did not follow through on what he said. Not only did he cut funding for research, he also cut seven research station facilities across Canada.

He also said research for the smaller sectors of agriculture would be those hardest hit. What if that had been our policy in the past? There would have been no research to develop canola, one of the greatest assets in the western regions. Perhaps we would not have developed the lentil market we have had we followed the agriculture minister's policy. Perhaps because of his policy we will not develop the herbs and spices market to its full potential. That is a step which would harm diversification rather than assist it. The minister said he is committed to diversification and a broadening of the scope of agriculture. The agriculture minister's actions and his words do not line up.

I would like to return to the situation of supply management. What has happened is very unfortunate. Specifically on on article XI the minister of agriculture stated:

It is no secret that there is not a great deal of support for our position among the other GATT members. But we will continue to fight for that position. Our bottom line is that we will do what we have to to protect supply management.

It was obvious to the whole world, surely it was obvious to the finance minister, that Canada stood alone in its defence of article XI and that there were to be changes. The agriculture minister should have done the responsible thing and communicated the reality of the situation to agriculture producers. He should have done that before the election rather than waiting until after the election. Now their support is so slim they can do nothing whatsoever and they will have to go along with the changes proposed in the GATT agreement in 1994.

With respect to international trade, in campaign ads in his attempt to win the Liberal nomination in Regina—Wascana in 1988, his material contained the following:

This election will be the most crucial in our lifetime. It demands strong, decisive action to stop the bad Mulroney trade deal which threatens our future and our very way of life.

That is from the *Leader-Post* of September 15, 1988.

• (1145)

As the whole world knows, we need trade agreements. More of them are being put in place every day. We also know the Liberal government, including the minister of agriculture, campaigned against the free trade agreement. However, once the Liberals got into power they did nothing to change it although they said they would change it. They said they had wonderful changes planned for the North American free trade agreement. Once they got into power they made no changes whatsoever. Again, what the agriculture minister said and his actions were two separate things.