

Supply

make it a non-votable motion, and we speak the way we have been speaking. Every one knows the concern and I suspect I know it better than the hon. member because I farm and he does not. If the NDP want to be really serious about making it non-partisan, do not make it a votable motion.

Second, if the NDP wants it as a votable motion, it should not try to be cute and hide the fact that this is essentially a vote on the budget and as such is a confidence motion. If the NDP wants to do that, fine, but do not get up and grandstand in the meantime when it has done some things to be very cute at a time when we do not need to be cute in this place. We need to do everything we can to support Canadian farmers who need our support.

Mr. Laporte: Mr. Speaker, I do not appreciate being called cute, but I think the fact is that it is very clear, and the minister knows, that this does not have to be a vote of non-confidence. This is a motion that was a result of an emergency meeting of the Standing Committee of Agriculture, whereby most of the farm groups in the country appeared before the committee or had representation in front of the committee and called on it to take some action. They were expressing their concern over the lack of response on a third line of defence and over the desperate straits that many people in agriculture right across this country are in.

As a result of that debate, there was an all-party committee that unanimously endorsed the motion that is before us. We have brought this into the House today to further acknowledge the problems that exist in agriculture and in the spirit of non-partisanship brought it forth. Our motion states that it is not a vote of confidence. The minister knows that.

I am beside myself to understand why the minister is the one that is being cute. He is the one who is playing petty politics. I do not know why he is doing it. It certainly does not help Canadian agriculture.

Mr. Jack Shields (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, perhaps I can enlighten my friend across the way. When a House of Commons standing committee makes a motion and presents it to the government, it has nothing to do with confidence. It is the position of the House of Commons standing committee and it was unanimously done and

presented. The government took the motion into consideration.

What the NDP has done on an opposition day—that is what it says, opposition day—is made a votable motion and taken the motion from the House of Commons standing committee but added to it:

That, in the spirit of House of Commons reform and in recognition of the clear and urgent need, the House does not consider this to be a question of confidence in the government.

It stated this knowing full well that the motion itself refers to the budget. The committee can comment on and put it forward to the House and no confidence is involved. That member should know that this is a confidence motion.

If the NDP wants to make it a votable motion and remove the bottom part of it, make it a votable motion. Then we know it is a non-confidence motion and it is done with. If you really want to make it a non-partisan issue, as it was done in the House of Commons standing committee and brought forward to this House, remove the bottom portion and make it—the member is not listening, obviously he does not want to listen. I am suggesting that if you want to make the motion non-partisan in this House, remove that sentence at the bottom and make it non-votable. Then we can all stand and address this very serious problem plaguing the agriculture industry right across this country and get on with the work, instead of becoming partisan the way we are doing today.

• (1230)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Van De Walle): I regret the time for questions and comments has elapsed. Very well, a very short comment.

Mr. Rod Laporte (Moose Jaw—Lake Centre): Mr. Speaker, I am amazed. This is a party that talks about open government and more reform and they are the ones who are stalling it.

I am sure that the people in western Canada will be pleased to see this debate where this government is refusing to allow a vote in a situation where it is clearly allowable. The member can keep playing politics all he wants but the people of Canada see clearly what they are doing. This is a time to move to a more open government. The New Democratic Party believes in that and I wish the member would as well.