

Business of Supply

if he can get \$1,500 to \$1,800. I say to the government that when we start talking about farm income at this time we are getting pretty close to the poverty level.

During the last crop year farmers only reached a four or five-bushel quota, and from all indications their deliveries will not be any higher this year. I have told this House before, and I repeat, that our farmers cannot exist on a five-bushel quota. This low quota has existed for three or more years and there has to be a day of reckoning. This day is fast approaching if our family farm operations are to survive.

I support the motion this party has placed before the House. Farmers should be paid storage on farm-stored grain. Under present conditions farmers are asked to carry abnormal amounts of grain and it is not their fault that we have a glut of grain. There are other things this government could do to help the farmer. It should investigate the possibility of overseas storage facilities for unsold grain. I understand that at the present time the only grain in this forward position is sold grain. Most grain moves through Rotterdam or Tokyo. Often a customer wants 200,000 bushels or less in a hurry, perhaps in five to ten days. Because we have no unsold grain in this forward position, we cannot take advantage of these orders. I realize these are not large sales, but small sales often lead to large sales and we should investigate every possible way to sell more grain.

The government must look at our entire sales policy. No matter what figures you look at, we are not getting our share of world markets. I realize all wheat producing countries are facing problems similar to ours; however, nobody has lost a greater share of markets than Canada. This situation cannot be allowed to continue. Not only must we stop this downward trend in sales; we must recover the markets we have lost. Whenever I am home I hear farmers questioning the effectiveness of Wheat Board sales. These farmers want the Wheat Board but they feel it is slow to react to market conditions. Perhaps it is time we had a shake-up in the Wheat Board, with no appointees serving for more than five years until we see how effective they are.

The government must show leadership in facing up to our agricultural problems. It should, through the Department of Industry, Trade and Commerce, set up a special sales

force to assist the Wheat Board in selling our surplus grain. The government should eat, sleep and talk grain until we sell our surplus and recover our markets. Let the government become aggressive about wheat sales. It has been stated that if Canada had maintained the share of world trade in wheat, oats and barley we had 15 years ago, we would have no surplus of grain today.

Until this government has recovered our wheat markets there must be immediate assistance to western farmers. This assistance could be in the form of an acreage payment to tide the farmers over the present serious situation. Our party has asked many times during this session for acreage payments. The need was never greater than it is now. Acreage payments do not represent a long-term solution to our agricultural problems, but at least a substantial acreage payment would tide the farmers over until the government came up with an effective long-term policy. Surely, a government that can wipe out Expo's debt to the tune of \$125 million, and give \$80 million to the Ford Motor Company, can give the western farmer a small slice of the pie.

We have contended that no other industry could survive the cost-price squeeze the farmers have been faced with in the last ten years. This was never brought more to light than by the special report on farm machinery prices tabled in the House last Friday. This is a prime example of how the farmer has had to sell in open world markets, yet buy his equipment in a protected Canadian market.

I have received many letters from constituents who indicate their alarm over recent government action. I should like to quote from a letter I received last week from a constituent who is a farmer. He said:

Hon. Otto Lang's attitude to farmers selling grain at below Wheat Board price seems to indicate a total lack of understanding of western farmers' problems. No one would willingly sell his grain at less than market price unless he was desperate for cash. Surely instead of attacking farmers, Mr. Lang would do better to spend his energy on finding legitimate ways for the farmers to obtain cash for their product.

Another thing, this is not the time for the government to cut back on funds for agricultural research. Agriculture is not to blame for the present inflationary trend and the government should be making every effort to help the farmers function better, not make things more difficult for them.

This letter is very indicative of western feeling. Other members wish to speak, and I will