

Supply

much as \$50 billion U.S. annually. Surely that should account for something.

We face a very, very large problem in this sector of the Canadian economy, not because we are bad at what we do. We are good at what we do. We have to address it, and we have to do everything we can at the GATT. In the meantime, we are going to do everything that we possibly can to keep our farmers in business until we get a solution at the GATT.

Again, I think we have a very good chance of doing something at GATT this time around so that we can finally get some rules in place for Canadian agriculture that treat agriculture in the same way that other commodities are treated.

We understand the problem. Our record is there to show what we have done. Our record is there to show what we have been able to do in terms of putting pressure on internationally, and we are prepared to continue to do that.

I want to take a couple of minutes if I can on the motion. Nobody can disagree with the import or the content of the motion "to consider the advisability of providing third line of defence cash assistance on an emergency basis to provide the same level of support that would have been provided under the Gross Revenue Insurance Program", et cetera.

I think we have to be careful on the numbers, because we want to stick strictly with the numbers. I can demonstrate that that same kind of support is there, but I do not think that is the issue. Farmers are concerned about cash, so nobody can find much difficulty with considering that kind of thing.

As I have already said, we are prepared to do as much as we possibly can. What I do have difficulty with is the last two lines of the motion I have in front of me: "in the spirit 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."

The hon. member should know that this is not the case. He should know, if he wanted to speak to his House leader, that this is the kind of reform that is under consideration. If we were to vote for this motion because of the way the rules are in the House, because this is a supply day and because it is a surrogate motion if you

will, on the budget, we are voting against our own budget.

If the hon. member wants to do this kind of thing, I would put a lot more stock in what he is saying. He could have phoned me up an offer or whatever for a kind of bi-partisan—if that is the right word—or all-party support. I have had some of those calls from the Official Opposition.

When he comes with this kind of a motion, I have to think that he is trying to play politics with Canadian farmers. As a farmer himself, he knows there is a desperate situation out there. Farmers do not need this.

To suggest that "in recognition of the clear and urgent need", the House does not consider this to be a question of confidence simply is not the case because this is an Opposition Day. This is a supply day. It is really a motion that is attached to the budget.

I suspect there is a lot of sympathy for the concern that is expressed in the main body of the motion.

• (1140)

To attach that on at the end really does not do any good in terms of sending out the right kind of signal from this place, which is that we understand the concerns of our farmers and that we are going to do everything we can to support them through this difficulty. I believe we will get through it, and I believe we are going to see improved grain prices.

In the meantime, as I said, and just to say again, we are going to do as much as we possibly can to see that our farmers get through this difficulty so that when we get better international prices and we can have some sanity in the European community—and I did not talk about the Americans or the Japanese, which I very much could—that we are going to have our farmers out there to take advantage of some of these better prices.

Again, I wish the NDP would stop trying to play politics in a very, very difficult situation out there with our Canadian farmers.

Mr. Althouse: Madam Speaker, on a point of order. Near the end of his remarks, the minister did raise something which I think is a point of order. As you know, being Speaker of the House, the whole motion itself ploughs new ground in terms of procedures in this House. The committee passed this motion, which under