

tribution to that program. However, it may be that in a year or two the government will find that the stabilization program is costing it more than it anticipated, and in the interests of restraint will start to cut back on that program. Quite frankly I am disappointed at the Minister of Agriculture not standing up for the western grain producer and making other cabinet members aware of the importance of agriculture to Canada.

There is no question but that the government must exercise restraint in its spending, but quite frankly when you consider many of the government programs and expenditures, there are many areas where cuts could be made which would create little or no hardship. I am reminded of the \$88 million expenditure for language training facilities at a Canadian Forces base in the province of Quebec over the next three or four years. One need only examine the latest report of the Auditor General for further examples.

Agriculture is not only vital to Canada but is vital to the whole world in this time of population explosion and starving millions. The farming industry must remain viable. It can remain viable only if the government supports the programs which it brings into effect on a long-term basis. It is the responsibility of the Minister of Agriculture to see that the programs receive the support of the government. Only time will tell whether the minister is known, or will remain known, as a friend to the farmer.

[Translation]

Mr. Irénée Pelletier (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, before giving the official answer of the department, I wish to say that I am extremely surprised by the comments that have just been made by the hon. member for Moose Jaw (Mr. Neil), when he said that the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Whelan) takes very little interest in western farmers' problems.

I believe that the minister has shown on several occasions his concern for agriculture in Canada, not only in the western provinces, but in Quebec, in the Maritimes and throughout Canada. I consider the hon. member's comments that the minister does not seem to be concerned by these problems as totally unjustified, useless and making no sense at all.

[English]

I am surprised to see this question before us again tonight. As the House will recall, this matter was discussed on February 9, just one week ago, when it was raised by the hon. member for Okanagan-Boundary (Mr. Whittaker). There is nothing further that can be added to what was said last week. I would, therefore, refer the hon. member opposite to page 10779 of *Hansard* wherein this subject was fully discussed. In addition, the President of the Treasury Board (Mr. Chrétien) has advised me that he sent a letter to the hon. member in which the facts were once again placed before him.

As the hon. member was advised on these occasions, a letter was sent to all provincial ministers of agriculture. Provincial officials are continuing discussions with officials from Agriculture Canada. Until these discussions result in a mutually satisfactory agreement it will remain impossible to advise of the precise manner in which this decision will be implemented. Nevertheless I can assure

Adjournment Debate

the House that the requirements of the Crop Insurance Act will be honoured.

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker, the hon. member opposite has raised questions about agriculture in the world, its importance, and so on. I think that when dealing with a matter such as the one he raised tonight, that is crop insurance, it has nothing to do with the world population, or with anything else. He should have dealt mainly with crop insurance. If one wants to deal with everything happening in agriculture, with anything at all, no answer can be given. If the hon. member is not satisfied with the answer given to him, this is because he has asked this kind of question three or four times within two or three weeks.

The minister has given an answer, he is concerned with what happens not only in eastern and western Canada, but throughout the country. He met with provincial minister of agriculture and public servants, to get this program to work. Therefore, I hope that they will finally begin to understand.

● (2210)

[English]

ANTI-INFLATION BOARD—REASON FOR REDUCING AMOUNT OF WAGE INCREASE FOR UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO LIBRARY WORKERS

Mr. David Orlikow (Winnipeg North): Mr. Speaker, when the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) first announced his so-called anti-inflation program, members of the NDP opposed the proposal made by the Prime Minister and have opposed it ever since. We said then that the program would not work, that it would be inequitable in its application, and that while it might control wages it would certainly not control prices or profits. Even we did not realize how correct we were and how quickly the truth of what we were saying would be demonstrated.

On February 10 I asked the Minister of Finance (Mr. Macdonald) to explain why, despite the fact that in the debate in the House and in explaining the provisions of the legislation in the committee the minister had said that people making less than \$3.50 an hour would be exempted from the 10 per cent maximum increase in wages and salaries, the Anti-Inflation Board scaled down the terms of the agreement reached between the Canadian Union of Public Employees on behalf of its members working in the library at the University of Toronto and the University of Toronto. The minister simply replied that he would discuss the matter with the board, but of course there have been no explanations from the minister and no change in policy by the Anti-Inflation Board.

Let me put on the record very briefly what the case is about. The union and the University of Toronto reached an agreement after a 20-day strike, under the provisions of which employees at the bottom of the wage scale at the University of Toronto working in the library would get an 18.5 per cent average increase in their wages. The wage increase to employees at higher rates was substantially lower.

The university refused to implement this agreement which they had negotiated because the Anti-Inflation Board advised them that the maximum it could agree to