

### *Supply*

For example, the Americans have set up a system which includes debt forgiveness and they have restructured their debt forgiveness procedures putting their farmers at a considerable advantage over ours. They have, over the long term, come to the conclusion that the debt load their farmers were carrying was just too heavy. They took the attitude that the situation in the United States was like an airplane flying at 30,000 feet which was absolutely certain to come down. The choice was whether it would have an easy glide and a fairly soft landing, or it would crash. These are the same options that our government has today. Is it going to make the landing a little softer, or is it going to let the agricultural community crash and be destroyed, thereby making Canada reliant for her food resources on other countries?

**Ms. Catherine Callbeck (Malpeque):** Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to take the opportunity to compliment the hon. member for Egmont, from my province, for his comments on this very serious issue.

**An hon. member:** Hear, hear.

**Ms. Callbeck:** I especially appreciated his comments on the PVY-N virus, the crisis we are having in our province at the present time.

• (1650)

I know my time is limited so I just want to mention one thing that the member referred to, and that is the compensation claims that the potato farmers have made for their 1990 crop. Four hundred compensation claims were sent to the government and at present only a hundred of our potato farmers have received any money. That seems like a long time to wait for the money, and certainly it is putting many farmers into very serious financial problems. I think it is very unfair for the government to expect farmers to wait this length of time and I would call on the government to do everything possible to speed up this process.

**Mr. David D. Stupich (Nanaimo—Cowichan):** Mr. Speaker, I think it is worth while to review the resolution: "In view of the desperate financial cash flow crisis facing Canadian grains and oilseeds and horticultural producers the House of Commons calls on the Government of Canada to consider the advisability of providing cash assistance that would have been provided under the Gross Revenue Insurance Program and the Net Income Stabilization Account, had they been in place for 1990-91".

I read that resolution to remind members in the House, all 295 of us, that we are not instructing the government, that is the cabinet, but we are simply asking it to consider the advisability of helping at this time. That is why various members have expressed their disappointment that the Minister of Grains and Oilseeds chose to say that this was considered by the government as a matter of non-confidence. He said that the rules and the procedure in the House required it to be so. However, the Speaker at that time did not rule that way. The Speaker at that time, quoting from one of the books of authority—and I do not recall exactly which one—said that the government can decide whether a vote is or is not a vote of non-confidence. This leads me to believe that the minister at that time could have said: "We agree, it is not a vote of non-confidence, we agree that it is simply advising the cabinet of how the members in the House feel; that they think it is an emergency and that they think it is an emergency that can be helped by a cash infusion at this time and that we think it is proper that cash infusion be made at this time".

However, presumably the minister, on behalf of cabinet, did not want the members to be able to vote that way. What he was really doing when he said it would be considered a vote of non-confidence was reminding the members on the Tory side of the House that they would be required to vote against this resolution when it comes to a vote. He did not want them to have the right to vote for it because in committee they expressed that right by voting for this very same resolution. He did not want them to have that right in the House.

One can only wonder why. One can only hope that the government does have plans to make this kind of cash infusion. One can hope that it is going to use it for political purposes just as it did five years ago when it approved during an election campaign in Saskatchewan a cash infusion of one billion dollars under similar circumstances one week before the farmers went to the polls and voted, along with the other voters in Saskatchewan.

Let us hope that it has the same plan in mind this time and that some time during the election campaign, which is to be announced momentarily just as it is in B.C., the government will decide: "Yes, it is just and proper that we help the farmers not just in Saskatchewan but all over Canada at this time. So we have decided that we are going to make this kind of cash infusion". That it will happen one week before election day is perhaps fortuitous for the Tory government in Saskatchewan but even more important for the farmers, in particular the wheat producers, in that province. Farmers all over Canada are