

Wheat Export Prices

industry. The explanation was this was good for employment and good for the economy as a whole.

By the same token a cash injection into a sorely tried prairie economy at this particular moment would have the same beneficial effect. Toronto is 13. Montreal, which is supposed to be operating under financial straits and has had to resort to lotteries and such like as well as having had the cancellation of the \$125 million Expo deficit, is 20 on the list. This is not too bad when you compare it with the general picture. The city of the hon. member for Calgary South, Calgary, was 16. That for the most part I think is due not to the wheat economy but the oil economy. Lethbridge is 56 and Red Deer is 60. I present these figures to indicate that in addition to the immediate crisis as outlined in the statement from the Federation of Agriculture, there has been a relative position of financial inequity because of the problem outlined by the minister of supply with regard to location of industry head offices and all the other disparities which affect the western economy in broad terms.

This is the immediate crisis. Obviously, the many supporters of the government do not appreciate it. The Minister of Agriculture does not realize the significance of it. According to press statements, the Prime Minister is now aware that there is a major crisis because certainly it was brought home to him in a very vociferous manner which indicated the degree of the farmers' frustration. We take the opportunity of this debate today and this evening to urge upon the government some action to relieve the hard pressed prairie farmers.

Before I conclude, perhaps I might be allowed to mention a more immediate and urgent problem. That is the assurance from the government as we come to the end of the current crop year that every delivery point in western Canada will be assured of at least a five-bushel delivery quota. One of the protests I heard last week, as well as the letters which come across my desk copies of which were sent to the Minister of Agriculture, the Prime Minister and so on, are to the effect that there is still a shortage of box cars. Many points are still on a three-bushel quota without any hope of any delivery of the three-bushel quota. We need immediate emergency action to at least assure this minimum delivery to all points across western Canada.

Finally, because my time is limited, let me say in respect of the Prime Minister sallying

[Mr. Dinsdale.]

forth into the west last week on a voyage of discovery to see what the prairie problem was all about, that he was really motivated by political events in the province of Manitoba. I do not think there was a more direct indication of a political protest than that which exists on the prairies. This message came through very loud and clear to hon. gentlemen on the other side of the house. They are aware of the political facts of life, and some of them might be whistling in the graveyard, if we may judge from the speeches made today, but the events in Manitoba above all else should convey a message to the politician that these people demand action from the government at this time.

Mr. Steven E. Paproski (Edmonton Centre): Mr. Speaker, having come from a metropolis such as Edmonton, which is the Klondike city of western Canada and strongly in support of the underdog, I find the government treatment of the wheat situation a rank scandal. In his trip to western Canada, the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) revealed the mind of a bureaucrat, bound by regimentation, quoting regulations, and reiterating old policies as though these things were the answers. Wheat farmers cannot eat policies. He parroted the economists' argument that if wheat is not selling, if farmers are short of cash, it must be because they are running uneconomical farms. How is it that farms now described as uneconomical were making money a few years ago when this government first came into office?

• (11:20 p.m.)

The Prime Minister's argument is simply to put the blame on the Canadian wheat farmer for the government's failure to sell wheat. It is a straight case of buck passing, one of the most blatant ever seen in Canadian politics. The Prime Minister's brand of suave, philosophical soft-soap no longer washes with people desperately in need of a clear, effective policy from the government. By that I do not mean words. I mean action and cash guarantees.

As soon as the word "cash" is mentioned, the little coterie around the Prime Minister start yelling "subsidy". Subsidy is not necessarily a bad word. Ask the auto-makers. It is too bad that the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce (Mr. Pepin) is not here at present. I ask those in search of the solution to the wheat problem to read the Bible. My friend, the hon. member for Red Deer (Mr.