

is history to do such a thing, is nonsense, is not correct and the people of Canada should be aware of that.

• (1220)

I am really surprised that the government would take the position it has on this particular issue. It is certainly my hope that the government will see its way clear to decide that this motion is not a matter of non-confidence. It is in the best interests of agriculture across this country to do so.

It is not the New Democratic Party playing politics, it is this government that is playing politics and the minister playing politics, and he knows it.

I do appreciate some of the comments. In fact given some of the comments the minister made, I am surprised at the attitude he has taken. I appreciate the fact that he indicated that the farm communities across this country are in a terrible situation, that in fact the infrastructure is disappearing and if something does not happen very soon, the dealers in fertilizers, chemicals, fuel and so on are going to disappear and we will lose an infrastructure that will be very difficult, if not impossible to replace.

There has been a tremendous amount of interest in the recent past by academics and others in finding ways to save rural Canada with respect to not only agriculture but also to fishing and forestry and so on.

It is essential that we maintain a viable economic base and viable farm families in rural areas where agriculture is an important industry. I appreciate the minister's remarks in acknowledging that. That is important. It is a first step.

With respect to other comments made by the minister, it is true that Europe has caused Canada a lot of grief with its programs. I am surprised that the minister did not go on to mention the United States, which is also causing problems, particularly with its export enhancement program. The United States has been moving into this area, which really has not been an area where the Europeans are dealing. Their export enhancement program provides a subsidy on grain sales which makes it very difficult for the Canadian Wheat Board and others to sell grain from this country. The express purpose of the export enhancement program, as indicated by the Americans some time ago was to compete with the Europeans.

### *Supply*

It is very clear now that the use of the export enhancement program has expanded to countries where the Europeans are really not a major competitor. In fact, it is where Canada is a competitor and where the EEP has hurt us directly.

The other factor is that under the free trade agreement, I believe it is Article 701.4—I stand to be corrected on that, but I believe it is the correct article—in agriculture, neither country shall interfere with respect to subsidies, in the markets of the other party. The United States has clearly done that and there are many examples where the United States has moved into countries that have been traditionally Canadian markets, have implemented the export enhancement program and have cost Canadian farmers sales.

There is a remedy under GATT which we have to pursue, but there is also a remedy under the free trade agreement. I am surprised that the minister and this government are not taking stronger action with respect to the lack of compliance by the Americans with the free trade agreement, their lack of respect for the free trade agreement and their lack of respect for Canadian agriculture. I wish the minister had expanded on that.

I believe I only have a minute or two left.

I would just like to close by saying this and reiterating my opening remarks. I am disappointed in the comments of the minister with respect to calling this a matter of non-confidence. I do hope that members of the agriculture committee on the other side of the House will be making positive comments with respect to this matter. I really wish and really hope in the spirit of openness and fair play that the minister will please retract his remarks and make it clear that the government does not consider this a vote of non-confidence because no one else does.

The fact is that if there was a vote today and the government voted for it, there is no way the Governor General is going to call an election. The minister knows that. The minister should make some comments with respect to that and let Canadian agriculture know that the government is going to vote for this motion in the spirit of co-operation in this House.

**Hon. Charles Mayer (Minister of Western Economic Diversification and Minister of State (Grains and Oilseeds)):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to comment on the remarks the hon. member made as far as procedure is concerned. If the NDP wants to make this a non-partisan issue, then I suggest they do one of two things. First,