

*Prairie Grain Advance Payments Act*

are costs involved for trucking, for grain loaders and the fuel required for both these machines. In addition there is the cost of storage and hiring labour. All these are added to the cost of drying the grain.

A test has just been carried out by the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool. They installed, 25 feet from a country elevator so they did not break the fire insurance regulations, an MC600 continuous-flow drier. They bought 10,033 bushels of wheat for \$10,584. After drying the wheat they had left 9,267 bushels. It was worth more per bushel, namely, a total of \$11,260. There was a net loss in the drying process of 716 bushels. Therefore, after the wheat was dried there was a profit of \$675. But while they made a profit of \$675 on the value of the wheat, namely, 10,000 bushels, the charge—and the wheat pool kept very meticulous figures when carrying out this test—for 66 hours while the drier operated, at \$13 an hour, was \$858. This meant there was a net loss of \$182.65 on those 10,033 bushels of wheat which had originally been purchased. This is another reason why farmers are not making use of all the driers available.

The farmers know, if the Minister without Portfolio does not, that in many instances, after paying for drying and meeting all the accompanying costs involved therein, they will be even farther in the hole. Making available an additional \$600 cash advance will not even begin to solve the problem; the felony will only be compounded.

We have instances in the northern parts of the province where grain has sprouted, or after being hauled into the elevator is found to be heated. There has been very little of this so far but the situation will get worse before it gets better. When farmers haul in wheat in this condition, because it is out of condition they are paid as little as 91 cents or 98 cents a bushel. If they have already taken the \$1 advance they will not receive enough money to repay the advance. Now the minister suggests they should take another ten cents cash advance.

There is a further reason why all the driers are not being used. There is a natural desire—it is perfectly understandable; I would do the same, as I am sure my hon. friends opposite would—on the part of the farmer to save all the expense, time and effort that he can by holding off and trying to get the maximum amount of grain into the elevator on the three bushel damp wheat quota. As I say, this is perfectly reasonable; I would do the same and so would any member

[Mr. Benjamin.]

of this house who was in the same position. Therefore the farmer is not in any great rush to use the driers.

There is no apathy or complacency on the part of our farmers, but they are saying there is indeed apathy and complacency on the part of the government. This attitude of the government has further frustrated them. If the government is not interested in doing something to improve the situation with regard to grain driers and the use thereof, the farmers wonder why they should carry all the cost.

I submit that I have given six reasons, some of which are stronger than others, why grain driers are not being used to the full extent. The strength of the reasons depends upon the part of the west from which you come. I hope I am wrong, Mr. Speaker, but I am afraid that this additional cash advance program will not mean the increased use of driers that is hoped for. I am afraid that a large number of farmers will still hesitate to dry their grain any sooner than they have to. As long as the weather remains 35 or 40 degrees below zero, the situation will not be corrected. As the hon. member for Assiniboia (Mr. Douglas) and the hon. member for Saskatchewan-Biggar (Mr. Gleave) can tell you, if the farmer is faced with the cost of loading his grain on to trucks for delivery to a drier, having the grain dried and then hauling it from the drier back to his farm in 40 below weather, the driers will remain idle.

Do not misunderstand me, Mr. Speaker: we are not blaming the government for the weather. There are many other things for which the government can be blamed and we do not have to use the weather. I assure the minister that neither I, my colleagues, nor hon. members to my right are in any sense of the word panicking when we bring these matters to the attention of the government. I tell him quite frankly that I have been angry for many weeks because of this situation. I think the minister and his colleagues from western Canada have also been angry and frustrated at the inability of their colleagues, particularly those in higher places, to understand not only the magnitude of the problem but the need to provide money to assist in solving it. I must say, sir, that if the Minister without Portfolio were able to persuade the Minister of Finance to part with that amount of money, I for one would be happy to decorate him outside the city hall at high noon in front of all his constituents and applaud him.