

*Supply—Agriculture*

be of economic benefit to the farming community.

**An hon. Member:** Were you listening?

**Mr. Olson:** I appreciate the remarks made by the hon. gentlemen opposite about the—

**Some hon. Members:** Order, order.

**The Deputy Chairman:** Order, please.

**Mr. Olson:** I particularly appreciated the remarks of the Leader of the Opposition who led off the debate, when he said in his opening sentence—

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Fortin:** Mr. Chairman, I rise on a question of privilege.

The Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Olson) says that the opposition does not suggest any solution. He knows the solution to the agricultural. It would be to create an agricultural bank in order to provide—

**The Deputy Chairman:** Order. I would ask the hon. member to allow the minister to go on with his statement, because there is no question of privilege.

[*English*]

**Mr. Olson:** Mr. Chairman, I was about to comment on the opening statement of the Leader of the Opposition, that I had opened the debate this afternoon with bland remarks about the entire agricultural industry. Let me say to him with all the charity I can muster, there is nothing bland about my attitude toward the agricultural industry. The hon. gentleman then went further by making the accusation that the country was being flooded with cheap United States corn, and indeed that importations were up something like 20 per cent. He did not give any date in this regard, or any calculation for a specific year as opposed to another. For his information, and I think it is well for the Leader of the Opposition to know these things, the average corn production in Canada from 1961 to 1965 was 42.2 million bushels. By 1966 this had increased to 66.3 million bushels. I am talking about Canadian production. By 1967 this had gone up to 74.1 million bushels, and in 1968 production increased to 78.1 million bushels. There has been a steady and significant increase in the production of Canadian corn.

If one is cleverly selective in digging up statistics he can show where there have been increases in the importation of corn, and also that there have been decreases. I think the Leader of the Opposition might like to have

[Mr. Olson.]

another look at the years he is talking about, because it may be that from one year to another there has been an increase in the importation of United States corn.

**Mr. Stanfield:** Don't you know?

**Mr. Olson:** At the same time there has been a steady and significant increase in the production of Canadian corn, particularly in Ontario and Quebec, which has been going into the Canadian market.

The hon. gentleman then went on to indicate there was a 6.4 per cent increase in farmers' costs over last year. I think he must have read the statistics wrong because the latest statistics show there has been a 6.4 increase in the index of farm input. This increase amounts to 2.9 per cent so far as costs are concerned. Perhaps that is even too much. I noticed that the hon. member for Crowfoot did not make the same mistake.

The Leader of the Opposition then complained about the decline in wheat exports this year as opposed to the year before and the year before that. That is true, but let me say this to that hon. gentleman. The 1967-68 crop year was the first crop year for a very long period of time that we were selling to the international market without an international agreement.

**Mr. Stanfield:** Whose fault is that?

**Mr. Olson:** Whose fault is that? There were 35 nations involved in respect of the agreement. If the hon. gentleman thinks that Canada has any way of forcing her will on the rest of the world he had better reassess his assessment of the situation. It was not Canada who refused to sign the new international grains agreement in April of 1967. I was not there, but my information is that had it not been for Canada coaxing these nations to come back to the negotiating table the talks would have dissolved and we would not have any agreement today.

**Mr. Horner:** Canada dealt with industries first.

**Mr. Olson:** That is only part of the story. What the Leader of the Opposition failed to see is that during 1964, 1965, and 1966 we had the highest levels of grains exports, and at the highest prices, in Canada's history.

**Mr. Horner:** Tell us why.

**Mr. Olson:** It may or may not be coincidental that the Liberal government was in office at that time.