

Supply—Agriculture

cultural Economics Research Council in an amount equal to one half the contributions to the council from other sources during the fiscal year but not exceeding, \$8,520,375.

Mr. Horner: When the house went to the consideration of private members hour at six o'clock, I was dealing briefly and rapidly with what the government should have been doing at least two months ago in attempting to deal with the difficult situation which was building up in western Canada. The minister has been out across the western region. I recall that even back in October he was pictured on television, walking in water amongst the swathed crops. He had plenty of evidence then of the situation, and it is too bad the government has not acted.

Mr. Olson: Did you say in or on the water?

Mr. Horner: I said in the water. We now have the facts, and know that something like 40 per cent of the grain crop has been taken off, and that in fact in northern Saskatchewan some 55 per cent of the grain still remains to be harvested. I suggested before, sir, that a correlated effort should be made to round up all available dryers from farmers who are through with them. This could easily have been done through municipalities, and a listing of them made for the government. The government could easily have paid the transportation costs of moving these dryers to the grain, or to the vicinity where there was a lot of damp grain. This course should have been adopted two or three weeks ago at the very latest. It was evident then there was going to be a lot of damp grain. Rarely is any crop harvested after the middle of November. It was known in November that a huge amount of damp grain was available, and the minister would have been wise to inform the farmers at that time that it would be better to abandon the damp grain. It would have been better to allow some to lie in the swaths.

As the hon. member for Qu'Appelle-Moose Mountain suggested, the government could have told the farmers to leave their grain in the swath. There is no question about it, that grain will lie in the swath over the winter. It will deteriorate a grade or two, but it is still there in the spring, capable of being harvested, depending on the type of spring weather we get. According to a recent article in the *Ottawa Journal* the minister said that farmers who have been careless, unlucky or unwise are no different from unlucky storekeepers or plumbers.

Mr. Olson: I didn't write the editorial.

[Mr. Speaker.]

Mr. Horner: When the minister makes such a statement, he is plainly abandoning his responsibility, and that of the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce, as well as that of the Minister without Portfolio, the hon. member for Saskatoon-Humboldt.

Mr. Olson: Tell that to the editorial writer; I didn't write the editorial.

Mr. Horner: I have had to dispute some newspaper articles during the time I have spoken in this house, but I can honestly say very few. If the minister wants to say he was misquoted—

Mr. Olson: No, I was not; I said I didn't write the editorial, that is all.

Mr. Horner: If the editorial writer put the wrong interpretation upon his remarks, I can only say that is tough; he must have been very misleading in his remarks.

We have a very difficult situation, and the minister has announced he is going to call an agricultural conference to study the whole agricultural industry in Canada. Back in the fifties, when we had a surplus of grain, the farmers were encouraged to diversify. Today, we have a surplus in rapeseed and, a surplus in mustard seed, and a surplus in flax is fast building up. The price of flax is going down correspondingly. Into what is the minister going to tell the farmers to diversify now, when the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce has not made any real effort to promote the sale of Canadian grain? As I mentioned before, a sale has been made to Red China. This sale consisted mostly of No. 4 and 5 wheat. No new agreement was made, and there was no mention of an agreement. This order took up the slack in the old agreement, which is running out. I ask the minister this question: Were Nos. 4 and 5 chosen because of price competition? In other words, I am asking whether Nos. 4 and 5 is the only wheat that is competitively priced with our major competitors in the world markets? Certainly I would judge this to be so.

Earlier today I dealt with the question of flour. The minister is fairly knowledgeable on that subject, because at one time there was a flour mill in his own constituency. It has since closed. There was one in Moose Jaw and that closed down last year. For the first time, Great Britain has not led the list as our best customer in cash sales; Japan has taken over. In fact our sales have fallen off.

Recently we exported some barley to Japan, and there was some doubt about its