

per cent to 20 per cent. There have been crop losses and falling cattle prices. Farmers are losing their farms and their machinery. They are not able to function. Lending institutions must be prepared to take the bad with the good, just as our farmers, our fishermen and our small-businessmen have had to do. They cannot have it both ways. They want to collect the top dollar and yet they are not prepared to collect fewer dollars when the person who owes them money is getting fewer dollars. Surely something along this line must take place in a civilized society no matter what political Party is in power.

The Tories across the way epitomize the whole business of greed and selfishness. They ask: "What is in it for me?" They say: "To hell with everyone else". In order not to step on the toes of its friends in the corporate and lending sectors, this Government will go along with that. There is no way that members of the Government will step on the toes of organizations which are hurting the very people they purport to represent. This type of tragedy has to stop. I hope that over the next few days we can resume debate on the report which is before us and pass it with the unanimous consent of the House without a vote. Then, the Government will have no choice but to act on it.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

[Translation]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please! It being 4 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of private Members' business as listed on today's Order Paper.

● (1600)

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS— MOTIONS

[English]

AGRICULTURE

PROPOSED LEGISLATION TO PROVIDE HIGHER WHEAT SALES RETURNS

Mr. Geoff Wilson (Swift Current-Maple Creek) moved:

That, pursuant to Standing Order 71(1), a committee be appointed to prepare and bring in a Bill with the objective of providing wheat producers with higher returns from wheat sales for human consumption in the domestic market place while avoiding undue hardship to processors and consumers and other wheat users.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present this notice of motion specifically on behalf of wheat producers in my constituency of Swift Current-Maple Creek, but generally on behalf of all wheat producers in Canada. The intention this afternoon is to focus debate in this Chamber on the special question of what is a fair return to the Canadian wheat farmer and how can Government ensure that fair return without inflicting undue hardship on processors, consumers and other wheat users?

Wheat Prices

In using Standing Order 74(1), I bring forward a motion that this House appoint a committee to prepare and bring in a Bill to study the intention of providing that fair return to the Canadian wheat farmer. The report of the Special Committee on Reform of the House of Commons has clearly stated that there should be more importance attached to Private Members' Business. We all know that in the past, private Members' Bills seldom, if ever, came to a vote. In putting this motion, I ask that a committee be appointed in order that we can have all-Party input into the formulation of a Bill which, hopefully, can be passed and passed in the best long-term interests of all Canadians, wheat producers and consumers alike.

Since August 1 of 1980, the domestic wheat price has been fixed under the Canadian Wheat Board Act between a maximum of \$7 a bushel and a minimum of \$5. Canadian mills buy wheat at prices set within this range by the Canadian Wheat Board. The formula price is set based on an average of the Thunder Bay and Pacific export prices weighted by volume of exports through the respective ports. On September 15, the price for October, November and December, 1985, was set at \$218.71 per tonne for approximately \$5.95 per bushel.

In putting this motion, I want to address and identify clearly the farm income crisis facing Saskatchewan and Canadian agriculture, with particular reference to the grain farmer. Between 80 per cent and 90 per cent of the Canadian wheat crop is marketed internationally and accounts for much of Canada's favourable balance of trade in agriculture. However, record world wheat crops have increased stocks, depressed prices and lowered the expected volume. In my Province of Saskatchewan there are approximately 66,000 farmers, and the average farm size is approximately 1,000 acres. The average capital investment is about \$480 per acre. Last year, in 1984, Saskatchewan farmers grossed approximately \$4.3 billion in farm income. Operating and depreciation expenses came to \$3.3 billion, leaving a net realizable income approximately \$1 billion which, divided amongst 66,000 farmers, gives a per farm average of \$15,000.

This year, 1985, projections are for \$3.8 billion in cash receipts and \$3.5 billion in operating and depreciation, leaving a realized net income per farm of \$5,500. From this sum, the farm family is to make payments of principal and to meet all of their other expenses, food, clothing, utilities and so on. To sum up, then, in 1985, in Saskatchewan, realized net income before various agricultural support programs such as crop insurance, stabilization and drought assistance, is a loss of some \$400 million. Total realized net income after these agricultural programs is \$360 million or \$5,500 per farm. This sum represents the farmers' labour. It also represents the return on a capital investment of almost half a million dollars per farm.

By way of contrast, the minimum wage in Saskatchewan is \$4.50 an hour. At 40 hours a week, an individual on the minimum wage would receive some \$9,360 per year without any capital investment whatsoever.

Moreover, the farm cost price squeeze is manifesting itself in lower farm land values. As asset values and equities erode,