

Business of Supply

sume the western surplus production. That would be one way to market the surplus production because one must live in our regions and hear with his own ears our farmers' complaints.

It is stupid, as they keep telling us, that they should have so much trouble getting adequate supplies, when western farmers do not know what to do with their surplus production. This is an illogical situation. Our good farmers realize it and complain about it, of course. In reviewing this problem, we should first seriously consider the possibility of selling a good part of these surpluses in eastern Canada, especially in Quebec.

The motion under consideration reads as follows:

That this House condemns the government's failure to make full use of existing facilities that are available for grain storage, its failure to provide adequate additional facilities, its failure to adopt and implement a system of payments for the resulting storage of grain on farm lands, by reason of which failures the farm grain economy and dependent industries are suffering serious and continuing harm.

The whole problem is being boiled down to a question of storage. My remarks were intended to widen its scope to a certain extent.

Surpluses must be disposed of, and to destroy them is a most stupid, not to say a most morbid, solution. Thousands of people are dying of hunger around the world. It is unthinkable that some produce that could bring relief to large numbers should be destroyed.

A study of the problem shows that elevators should be built across Canada and not only in the West. In 1962, the hon. member for Bellechasse asked that elevators be erected in Quebec. Had the proposals of the Ralliement Cr ditiste been heeded since then, this non-confidence motion might have proved useless today.

It is time the government pondered and considered a little more seriously the proposals made by the opposition.

It should, from now on, show at least its goodwill and stop saying over and over again; Sorry, nothing can be done.

• (4:30 p.m.)

We have surpluses that we are unable to sell, which would be the thing to do if we want to solve the problem. If not, we must stop accumulating them. However, such a measure would condemn many producers to unemployment and would eliminate the trade

[Mr. Matte.]

of a lot of people. This is unthinkable! And the government keeps on saying there is no remedy.

We reject this attitude, because we would like the government to show much more willingness and take concrete and effective measures. I therefore support the motion of non-confidence even though, in my opinion, we could also blame the government for its failure to seek solutions not only with regard to the storage problem, but also to the problem of grain marketing.

Some people should stop making profits out of storage alone, because it is indeed a ridiculous situation. Products should not be intended only for storage.

While the motion before us has some merit in that it puts the blame on the government, it is perhaps not clear enough. In fact, it might be possible to find all kinds of solutions to the grain storage problems but in the end, production would be intended for this sole purpose, which would be ridiculous. Marketing this grain should be our first concern.

Mr. Speaker, those are the remarks I wanted to make about this motion.

[English]

Mr. Cliff Downey (Battle River): Mr. Speaker, I feel compelled to take part in this debate. Conditions I have seen and experienced first hand in my riding as recently as the early part of this month have convinced me that it is almost impossible to overstate the gravity of the situation facing the prairie community today as well as our national economy. I congratulate the minister for the apparent sincerity evident in the remarks and comments he has made on his tours across the country. I would agree with some of his suggestions, but we have yet to learn whether the government intends to act on them.

His closing remarks today indicated that he wanted the opposition to take up the challenge, so to speak. May I remind him that he is a member of government and that the government must meet its challenges, not challenge the opposition by asking it to solve the desperate situation in agriculture.

The producers of grain are in desperate straits. Mortgages are being foreclosed. I know of three or four large farms, lying between 20 and 30 miles of my community, on which the mortgages are in the process of being foreclosed. We have spent much time in the House discussing subjects like Biafra; but you will notice, Mr. Speaker, that not too