

*Supply*

representations finally adopted a policy to make up for the hog producers losses.

Still in the same area, there have been shady speculators. I call them so because it is really "shocking" to see that all possible efforts are made in this House in order to try to reconcile—

**The Assistant Deputy Chairman:** Order. I regret to interrupt the hon. member but the time allotted to him has expired.

[*English*]

**Mr. Whicher:** Mr. Chairman, most assuredly I will try not to speak too long because I hope these estimates will be passed as quickly as possible. I remind my hon. friends, particularly those in the opposition parties, that one of the votes before us tonight is 15a, in respect of production and marketing grants and contributions of up to \$12,600,000. Some of that money will be paid to our friends in Peace River who, unfortunately, have faced a catastrophic situation certainly not of their own making. I would hope that these estimates might be passed quickly so that the Minister of Agriculture could pay this money to these unfortunate people who are victims of circumstances beyond their control.

Because I had an opportunity to visit western Canada in 1969 as a member of the committee on agriculture, I thought perhaps my friends, particularly those from western Canada, would excuse my making these comments because I obviously do not have their great knowledge about western grain farming. In 1969 the committee on agriculture visited the western provinces where hon. members saw the situation which existed. I can tell you it was a sad thing indeed to see what was happening in the west. In most instances the granaries and the drying sheds were full of grain. In many instances the grain was piled on the ground. Quite frankly, the farmers had so much grain that they did not know what to do with it.

• (2130)

I ask my friends from western Canada, most respectfully, to try to be fair for just a minute. I know that politics is politics and I know that you have to paint as bleak a picture as possible of members on the government side of the House. But I ask you to look at this question. What about the difference between now, February of 1973, and the spring or the fall of 1969?

I say to you most respectfully, Mr. Chairman, that the members of the Canadian Wheat Board, under the guidance of the government—because of course the government has something to do with the selling of grain—have accomplished a most remarkable job. It seems to me that the Minister of Justice should not be raked over the coals as he has been day after day in the past few days when he has been accused of not doing the job for western Canada. I say to you that he has done a most remarkable job. I say to you, further, that most certainly the province of Saskatchewan knows it because only last year they named him salesman of the year. Why? Because he sold more grain than any man has ever done in the history of Canada. Surely this is something that not only all Canadians should be proud of, but more particularly my friends

who represent farming constituencies in the three western provinces.

Many other things have been done apart from the selling of grain. I agree that there is some justification when some of my friends say that grain was sold at fire-sale prices. But let me point out that it was not sold at fire-sale prices; that grain was sold at world prices. I defy anybody, be he a Liberal or a Tory, to sell grain at a higher price than the price at which the rest of the world is selling it. It is an impossibility. On the other hand, it was sold and it is being sold today in huge amounts. Last year Canada achieved a world record and this year there will be another record, and from what we can see next year there will be another record.

The other night I listened to the hon. member for Qu'Appelle-Moose Mountain who was very successful as the grain salesman of the Conservative party in the Diefenbaker years. I was impressed by the hon. gentleman. It was the first time I had heard him speak. I know that he sold a great deal of grain with the co-operation of the government of that day, but the fact is that he was an amateur compared to our minister today.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Whicher:** However, he was not correct when he made the accusation the other day that the grain bins in western Canada are empty.

**The Assistant Deputy Chairman:** Order, please. The hon. member for Dartmouth-Halifax East wishes to rise on a point of order.

**Mr. Forrestall:** Mr. Chairman, I wonder if the hon. gentleman would entertain a question.

**Mr. Whicher:** I would be glad to accept a question, but we want to get these estimates through as quickly as possible. I will listen to the hon. member after completing my remarks. The fact is that when the hon. member for Qu'Appelle-Moose Mountain, who was the head salesman for the Conservative party some years ago, says that the granaries in western Canada are empty and that people in southern Asia and in other parts of the world such as India and Pakistan are hungry while Canada has grain to sell to them, he does not know what he is talking about—and you do not have to be a western farmer to recognize that. Only three weeks ago the Minister of Justice said that according to his figures—and surely we have to accept them—there are 1,100,000,000 bushels of grain in western Canada yet to be sold and we are getting this grain to the ports as fast as we can.

However, that is not the only thing that has been done for the grain farmers of western Canada in the last two or three years. I ask my Conservative friends, most of whom are fair and reasonable, why they did not do something about a two-price system for wheat when they were on the government benches. Why did they not have the courage to give to the western farmers something that they deserved? I will tell you exactly how much was provided by the taxpayers of Canada in the past year: it amounted to \$57 million which the farmers had never had before. The hon. member for Qu'Appelle-Moose Mountain had the chance to do the same in the 1960s, but he did not do it.