

dealing with a situation such as the one that now exists they are not asking for something to which they are not entitled. National disasters have occurred on a number of occasions in this country and the nation as a whole has rallied to help. I have in mind the Winnipeg flood or the steel mill that went belly-up in Nova Scotia. Surely this is another disaster in respect of which the whole nation should assist.

I suggest to the hon. member for Saskatoon-Humboldt and other western members on the government side of the house that the two people they must persuade are the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) and the Minister of Finance (Mr. Benson). I am sure that members from western Canada who sit on the government side are fully aware of the problem. They perhaps understand the situation better than I, and I hope they will go to extraordinary lengths to persuade their colleagues in the government and the Liberal caucus as to the urgent need for assistance. Several million dollars should be made available from the federal treasury to offset a portion of the cost of drying last year's crop. This grain must be put into condition in order that it can be sold. We must prevent it from spoiling.

I think I am being very conservative, and I use that word advisedly, in estimating the total cost of this operation at a minimum of \$70 million. Surely it is only fair that a third of this cost should be paid by the federal treasury. I hope members on the opposite side will endeavour to convince the Minister of Finance that for every dollar he puts into this operation now he will get \$2 back next year and the year after as a result of higher income and corporation tax returns and foreign exchange benefits through export markets. If one wants to look at this situation purely from a dollars and cents point of view, the country will benefit as a result of money being spent in this way by the government. All the money spent now will be returned over and over again as a result of higher income and corporation taxes paid by farmers and industries associated with agriculture. It will also, without question, benefit our export sales and our foreign exchange position.

• (2:30 p.m.)

Surely it is good business, therefore, for the federal government to now allocate at least \$20 million, and preferably \$30 million, in direct cash assistance. I suggest to the hon. member for Saskatoon-Humboldt that later this session he should introduce a measure to provide that the \$600 taken as a cash advance

under this bill will not have to be repaid by any farmer who has used the money to dry his grain.

A number of statements have been made by members of the government, and I am sorry to say by some people in the higher circles of the grain industry and even in one farm organization, to the effect that there is apathy and complacency on the part of the farmers in not drying their grain. These people have said that the driers are not all being used. This is perfectly true; they are not all being used. There are a number of excellent reasons why all the driers are not being used. Some of these machines are so old and obsolete that a farmer would be foolish to try to dry his grain in them, because a great deal of damage could be done to the grain.

The farmers of western Canada are not stupid; they know of this and other reasons that cause them to hesitate or delay using on-farm driers. I should like to illustrate why some of them are not being used. Farmers have heard about the large number of samples that have come back showing that grain that had been put through a drier had been damaged. The farmer therefore thinks he had better not take a chance in drying his grain and further spoiling it because it is in bad enough condition already. This farm income position inhibits, and that is a mild word, any further expenditure in drying his crop. I should like to illustrate this. I spoke on the telephone last night and this morning with elevator agents and a few farmers in my constituency. The right hon. gentleman from Prince Albert can confirm that Lake Centre is pretty well in the middle of the wheat growing area of western Canada. I think it is a reasonably good sample of the grain industry in the west. A great deal of the wheat being hauled to the elevators is graded No. 4 northern or No. 5 wheat. The initial price for No. 4 northern is \$1.36 $\frac{3}{4}$  a bushel, and if it is damp it brings the farmer \$1.19 $\frac{3}{4}$ . I am informed that after drying No. 4 northern wheat is often graded No. 5. In many instances wheat drops a grade after it has been dried. This brings the price down to \$1.22 a bushel, which is a further loss of 14 cents a bushel for drying No. 4 wheat. This is when the frost shows up in the grain, and it is graded accordingly. The farmer knows that No. 4 wheat may after drying be graded No. 5. In this case he loses money on the price of the wheat in addition to the cost of drying it.

There is another reason why all the driers are not being used. The cost involved is not just a matter of the rental of the drier. There