

Business of Supply

During the election campaign the minister declared, "I am the man who will speak for you in the Liberal cabinet, I will do everything possible." Why is he not speaking? What is he doing?

An hon. Member: Nothing.

Mr. Korchinski: Nothing. I would not mind if he did anything, but he annoys people in the process because he has made it very nice and comfortable for the railways and he has found a way out for the Wheat Board. Now, I have supported Wheat Board action over the years though I often wonder what wisdom there is in it. I think I have a right to question it. I have also acted as chairman of the local wheat pool and know their concerns. I also know that it is this government that raised the interest rate from 5 per cent to the 9½ per cent I pay now. The gentleman referred to in the *Toronto Star* report only paid 9 per cent, but he was lucky.

It is not only the interest rate that bothers me. I know there are some who would question the authority of Joe Caplan and say he had no right to act as he did in connection with rapeseed. However, he has provided me with some figures on the volume of wheat sales. The figures do not mean anything until translated into percentages in terms of world sales. With your permission, Mr. Speaker, I should like to put this table on record. It shows the figures from 1953 to 1968-1969 for the volume of sales and the percentage in terms of world trade. I think this table is important because of what is behind our complaint. So with your permission, Mr. Speaker, and with the permission of the House may I include as an appendix to my remarks in *Hansard* Table 3 of a report entitled "A Farmer's Reflections on Grain Marketing" by Joseph Caplan.

● (3:20 p.m.)

Our complaint is simply this. We have the necessary volume of space available at the terminals. There is space there for 70 million bushels of grain. We do not want to cram all that space immediately with every available bushel of grain because we must have some working room. It seems that the minister in charge of the Wheat Board who represents a western constituency, is more concerned about the efficient operation of terminal elevators than about the welfare of our farmers. He is afraid that a man here or there will be laid off. These men who are laid off will receive unemployment insurance in any

[Mr. Korchinski.]

event. High interest rates are driving many people out of business and if the minister thinks that his policies work for the ultimate benefit of the farmer he had better revise his thinking.

The government set up this nice Grains Council. We are supposed to be fighting inflation and yet when organized labour asked for a 30 per cent wage increase, its demands were met. According to a report tabled the other day, the banks have enjoyed tremendous increases in earnings. We told the Minister of Finance in 1967, I believe, that with increased bank rates farmers were going to suffer. And what do we find? We find that banks have enjoyed increased earnings of between \$154 million and \$250 million odd. With your permission, and with the consent of the House, I am also prepared to table supporting figures included on pages 2233 and 2234 of *Hansard* as an appendix to my remarks.

I have some figures before me which indicate the elevator price for wheat, oats and barley. I want all members in the House to remember that not everybody produces No. 1 wheat and that last year, because of damp grain, few farmers were paid on the basis of No. 1 wheat for their grain. There were all kinds of wheat grades last year. The last time I obtained the No. 1 wheat price for my crop was in 1961 when there was a drastic shortage of grain.

May I also include as an appendix to my remarks table 1 of the document entitled, "1969 Elevator Prices for Prairie Grains" indicating that as between the 1966-67 crop year and the 1969-70 crop year, there has been a drop in initial prices, even when one takes into account the 20 cents per hundred-weight freight charge, ranging between 25 per cent and 30 per cent. What other segment of our economy can claim to have suffered as much in the name of fighting inflation? I do not think anybody can absorb losses ranging between 25 per cent and 30 per cent and still stay afloat. These remarks apply not only to wheat but to barley, oats and other grains. I hope Your Honour and the House will permit the pertinent document to be appended to my remarks in *Hansard* since, if one is to make a careful analysis and study of the situation, it is essential for one to see the figures.

Farmers have had reduced incomes. What must they do, therefore? They must look for increased sales. But what is the picture? Last year the situation was difficult, and no doubt the minister will tell us that special circumstances prevailed last year. There was damp