

Supply

put them in a positive light as if it were something to celebrate. I am astonished.

He also told us about the use of less summer fallow. I was born and raised on a farm. In fact, I lived the first 19 years of my life not too far from the hon. minister's farm. I lived in exactly the same riding that he has represented for a number of years. I think I know a little bit about farming.

• (1620)

When farmers plant more and rely less on summer fallow does not suggest that there is confidence in the air and that farmers are exuberant and enthusiastic about the future. I will tell you what it is. Farmers are human beings, they have a human nature. When they feel the crunch and the pressure is building they will resort to almost anything to increase their revenue. That means planting more and taking more land out of summer fallow. That is exactly what they will do.

There really is a touch of unreality about some of the minister's remarks. He pooh-poohed the remarks of the member from Saskatchewan when that member expressed concern about the future of the Canadian Wheat Board. There is a concern in western Canada about the future of the Canadian Wheat Board. The minister was sort of suggesting that we should not worry, it is not going to be taken over by private interests or it won't be abolished or anything. I have a quote here from the Commissioner of the Wheat Board, Mr. Jarvis. He said recently that an "open border", that is, open between Canada and the United States, "could happen as early as next year, partly because of the 1988 drought. Subsidies are currently \$40 and \$50 a tonne above Canada's, that the drought of 1988 sharply reduced Canadian crop reduction increasing Canada's per unit subsidies on wheat and barley in the process".

Mr. Speaker, you do not have to take the word of the member from Saskatchewan or my word. Take it from the chief commissioner of the Wheat Board. Things could dramatically change in the very near future.

The other thing, and again I think it has this air of unreality, the minister says with some vehemence and great emotion is that farmers will not pay the GST. I appreciate the fact that they may get GST back that they have paid on inputs but at the same time, farmers are consumers. If the GST is on haircuts, farmers have

haircuts and they will have to pay the GST. If the GST is on a pair of trousers, I will bet you dollars to doughnuts that farmers will have to pay the GST on trousers. Somehow the minister is implying that farmers are not consumers, they never buy anything outside of trucks and tractors and cultivators. That is what I mean when I talk about the minister's remarks having a touch of unreality.

I would like to point out a few other things because I am mindful of the fact it is May 16. Here in the capital and back in my home city of Winnipeg, we notice that the sun is getting stronger, the temperatures are getting higher, the landscape is getting greener, kids are thinking about final examinations and getting out of school and having a fun time during July and August. Families and parents are thinking about their vacation plans as well. But what about down on the farm at this particular time, on May 16, 1990? I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, that the farmers are in a frantic period. Farmers are in a scramble because this is seeding time. The deadlines for farmers are very tight. They do not have the luxury of planting any old time they want. Of course, the weather can always be a problem. When the farmers have that moment to put the grain in the ground, they do exactly that. We appreciate what farmers are going through at this time, but that is a normal thing. It happens every spring and it goes with the trade, if I can use those words.

It is hardly normal on the farm these days because farmers are being hounded on so many fronts from so many directions. In this debate earlier this afternoon, we heard about the high interest rates, low commodity prices, low initial prices and about the subsidy war between the United States of America and European countries. Canadian farmers on the prairies are still feeling the effects of the 1988 drought, and the 1990 year is still in doubt. We do not know how it is going to be. Is it going to be another dry year, or is there going to be adequate precipitation?

While I am talking about farmers being assaulted on a number of fronts, another assault is on their support programs. I will touch on that if I can in a few moments.

A combination of these factors spells disaster for farmers. Mr. Speaker, you have heard the figures before, but I think they are worth repeating. Farm income will plummet this year. These figures do not come from