

Supply

I find that personally distasteful. I predict, and many farmers and other people in Saskatchewan predict, that come the next federal election we will not see one Liberal member of Parliament re-elected as a result of this single attack on farmers, as well as the rail-line abandonment issue.

The member for Malpeque, another Liberal member who voted in favour of the abolition of the Crow benefit, is now chairman of an agriculture subcommittee going around the country listening to farmers' concerns, joined by Reformers and other Liberals, to see what impact the elimination of the Crow benefit will be. We can tell them what the impact will be, but having the Liberal member for Malpeque and his other members go around the country listening to farmers' concerns is like putting a pack of wolves in charge of the hen-house. Liberal and Reform members are saying: "We want to hear what the impact will be, Mr. and Mrs. Farmer. Please tell us. Although we voted to eliminate it, we are going to try to listen to your concerns." That is a sham. That is a scam.

The Liberal member for St. Boniface, who participates in this debate from his seat, does not understand the issue because he does not have any rural component in his constituency. If he did, he would be in jeopardy of losing his seat as well.

How does the member from Dundurn explain that the elimination of the Crow benefit and massive rail-line abandonment will increase exports when in fact grain will not be produced for export in the same quantity as it is now? Farmers will be going bankrupt in substantial numbers and people will see a smaller number of farmers farming in western Canada. How does he square that?

• (1630)

Mr. Bodnar: Madam Speaker, the hon. member mentions the bankruptcy of farmers. The bankruptcy of farmers in Saskatchewan, should any arise, will be as a result of the provincial NDP policies not as a result of Liberal policy at the federal level.

Let us not forget that some policies in Saskatchewan which the hon. member has been espousing as being so wonderful are by the NDP government. It is the same NDP government in Saskatchewan that would not lower the provincial sales tax, which chased away business into other provinces. It is the same government that would not reduce the aviation fuel tax until pressured to do so, again chasing jobs away. This is because the NDP government in the province of Saskatchewan did not want to lower its equalization payments from the federal government.

The NDP government in Saskatchewan has been living like a welfare bum off the federal government. That is what it has been doing. As fast as we have been creating jobs in Saskatchewan under infrastructure and other programs, the Government of Saskatchewan has been destroying those jobs.

I do not believe the hon. member is in a position to be commenting on the devastation of the agricultural industry, which is not occurring in Saskatchewan. In fact, production is going up in other sectors such as hog production and cattle production. The whole industry will benefit rather than suffer, as indicated by the hon. member.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Mark Assad (Gatineau—La Lièvre, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the remarks made by the hon. member for Saskatoon—Dundurn and the questions posed by the hon. member for Regina—Lumsden show the conflict that exists in the agricultural sector and the need for reform.

Of course, we are concerned about the changes or budget cuts recently announced by the Canadian Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food. In its motion, the opposition denounces as unfair to some Canadian farmers the budget cuts recently announced by the Minister of Finance. These people are clearly acting in good faith but I am sure that they are mistaken.

Sometimes, our colleagues opposite do not realize that this country is facing a crisis as a result of the deficit accumulated over the past 15 to 20 years. Our deficit represents 73 per cent of GDP. We can no longer put it off. Whatever difficulties await us in the future, certain problems must be solved, namely bringing public spending under control and introducing sound management for all Canadians without exception.

The Department of Agriculture was asked to cut spending by 19 per cent. Other departments were also required to make sacrifices. The Department of Agriculture met the challenge and found a way to sweeten the pill by ensuring that the cuts are fair to all farmers across Canada.

Breeders in animal feed deficit areas receive feed grain transportation subsidies aimed at reducing the cost of this feed and allowing breeders to compete. Financial help is provided to breeders almost everywhere from the Atlantic provinces to the Yukon, including parts of Eastern Quebec, Northern Ontario and British Columbia. Those are the facts.

• (1635)

A subsidy on which rely the producers in most provinces, including Quebec, is about to disappear, but there is more. The government recognizes that this may not be a popular measure. It also knows that it cannot, and must not, ask producers to drastically change their operations overnight.

Contrary to what some might think, the government is willing to listen. During our post-budget consultations, we learned that