

Business of Supply

expensive to store it, usually someone in my audience suggests that this means it ought to be stored on the farm.

I think it is important for us to face the proposition with regard to storage, as with our handling and transportation system altogether, we must look hard at the question of where and how we can do the job most effectively and at least cost to the producer.

We have some real challenges facing us with regard to the total handling and distribution system, and again I would like to commend the hon. member for Mackenzie for apparently reading the speeches I am giving across the country on this subject. It is certainly a real challenge to produce a system for today's needs which is as effective and efficient as possible, and to remove from the farmer's shoulders any cost which is unnecessary because it is the child of inefficiency.

This is the challenge which faces us, a challenge upon which I welcome suggestions from hon. members opposite, a challenge which we will be picking up in the days ahead in discussions with farmers throughout the country, because I say to them that in large measure the choice is their's.

What farmers are entitled to know is the relative costs to them of various systems which may be possible. Then, in large measure, they ought to have the choice as to which cost they will bear, considering the incidental burdens, or difficulties, or changes in their environment or way of living which are implicit in the system or systems. It seems to me that this is a thing in which we must all join. We must examine these questions now, not in a spirit of partisan politics but with a view to coming to grips with the issue itself of providing as effective a system for the handling and transporting and dealing with our grain as it is possible for us to provide. That is why it grieves me when hon. members opposite, instead of accepting this challenge to go to the country to talk to the farmers about the efficiency of the system and ways of changing it, choose to concentrate on whether there should be more bushels or not at a given point in time at Thunder Bay or, even worse than that, suggest we should not use the most efficient and effective system of moving grain into those elevators.

● (4:20 p.m.)

Instead, it has been suggested we should move that grain in a way that would entail more storage costs to the farmer, because in the ordinary case he pays for storage. What

the government pays for storage is calculated on the grain in storage on August 1 and is not affected by the flow in or out of Thunder Bay during the year. More important than these costs involving small transfers from the farmers to the terminal companies are other costs involved in opposition members' proposals. They would have us use the elevator and transportation systems in an inefficient and unnecessarily expensive manner. Surely, hon. members opposite know that, the cost of inefficiency forced upon the railroad system is borne by us in the end, either by higher rates within the system or by subsidy payments through the treasury. I suggest, Mr. Speaker, that is not the best use of our money; it could be used to much better purpose if we would run the system efficiently and pay the money saved direct to producers.

To the hon. members opposite I say, by all means accept this challenge; join with us on this side of the House in talking to the farmers of this country about the problem of quickly and effectively making the changes which will put the grain industry and the individual farmer in the best possible position to develop a viable and happy industry. There is no doubt in my mind there is a place in this great country of ours for the family farm and all we must do is see that those parts of the system which are touched or affected by the government are made as efficient as possible as soon as possible. This will enable the benefits to flow to the individual farmer.

[*Translation*]

Mr. René Matte (Champlain): Mr. Speaker, I should like to say a few words about the motion before us.

Opposition members have said time and again that it would be possible to solve the problem of marketing the supposed surplus of western grain.

It is quite normal, before going into the matter of grain storage, to talk about grain marketing. We know in eastern Canada, and particularly in Quebec, that it is possible to use up a good portion of the grain produced in western Canada.

We always wonder why the government did not promote the study of certain solutions and also why it will not tackle the problem.

Before talking about storage, I wish to say that the surplus should be stored and then ways to market it should be studied. Even if the eastern population is considerable, it is probably not considerable enough to con-