

soundly reject the efforts of our Party to help the western farmers and, in fact, the Prime Minister's credibility. How did our friend's reputation stand up to that test?

● (1550)

Mr. Gustafson: I would like to respond to that question very positively. That question was asked on Global Television. I think that the Prime Minister's record stands for itself. The Saskatchewan people have spoken. I can assure you that in speaking with many hundreds of Saskatchewan farmers, they are very appreciative of the direction that the Prime Minister and this Government has taken, and the direction that any Hon. Member gives when it comes to advancing the positive direction of agriculture in Canada.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Debate.

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton—Melville): Mr. Speaker, it is nice to follow my good friend from Assiniboia. What he did not tell the House was that the Conservative vote went down in rural Saskatchewan by three or four points. The NDP vote went up in rural Saskatchewan by three or four points. In my riding, we ended up with our vote increasing by three or four points. We received 46 or 47 per cent of the vote. That bodes very well for the next federal election when we will sweep that riding and have nine or ten seats in Saskatchewan.

The Hon. Member for Assiniboia (Mr. Gustafson) is the only Member of Parliament from Saskatchewan to have a provincial Liberal member represent his riding. That is quite a phenomenon in Saskatchewan politics, but it happened in the riding of Assiniboia. For the first time in the history of Saskatchewan, we now have a majority Conservative Government that received fewer votes than the Opposition party. The NDP received more popular votes than the Conservative Party, yet, because of the redistribution of seats, and by some luck in certain areas, it ended up being the Government of Saskatchewan.

An Hon. Member: A 12 seat majority.

An Hon. Member: Statistics are for losers.

Mr. Nystrom: Maybe poles are for dogs, like John Diefenbaker said.

I agree with the Hon. Member for Assiniboia that this is a very important issue. We want to see this cash advance legislation go to committee as soon as possible. Farmers need this kind of legislation. It is a piece of legislation on which we can all agree. I think it should go to the parliamentary committee as soon as possible so that it can be passed and become law. After that we should address other important issues that affect farmers in Saskatchewan and across Canada.

As the Hon. Member for Assiniboia said, agriculture is the backbone of our economy. We are very fortunate to have the most productive farmers anywhere. Those productive farmers are facing a crisis through no fault of their own. They are in a crisis because of a trade war between the Europeans and the

Prairie Grain Advance Payments Act

friends of the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) in the United States, Mr. Reagan and his administration. Because of that trade war prices for many commodities are now at the 1933 to 1934 level. Because of that, it is incumbent upon the nation as a whole to come to the support of the farmers with a major deficiency payment.

I know the Government is talking about a farm aid Bill of around \$1 billion. We in Saskatchewan are hoping that about \$400 million to \$450 million will come to our grain farmers. That will be a help. I certainly do not criticize the federal Government for that. In fact, farm leaders and all politicians in the Prairies have been calling for a deficiency payment for farm aid. We do not know yet what form that farm aid will take. Will it be in terms of a grant, or will it be a combination of programs? Will it be based on marketing, or on acreage? We do not know those details. All we can say to the Government is that it should move as quickly as possible to make sure that there are cheques in the pockets of the farmers before Christmas because they need that money.

Another thing that is very important, and which I hope urban Members of Parliament realize, is that although \$1 billion sounds like a lot of money, it is still not going to make up what the farmers are losing because of a trade war and bad international prices. I understand that a few days ago there was a study published in Ontario which said that farmers in this country need around \$4 billion in support programs to bring prices up to where they should be in order for them to make a living and stay on the farm. One billion dollars is about a quarter of that. It is part way, but it is certainly not going all the way. I urge the Government to very quickly dispose of this Bill and send it to committee so that we can debate other issues of importance to farmers.

I believe there are a lot of things we can do. Agriculture is number one. When the farmer is better off, we are all better off, regardless of where we live. If the farmer is better off and making a few dollars, there will be a creation of jobs in the small towns and cities from one end of this country to the other. That will be good for Canada. It will be good for the creation of jobs in Ontario, the Atlantic region, Quebec, and western Canada. We had better start supporting the farmers more than we have in the past.

An interesting statistic about farm aid was released a while ago in *The Globe and Mail*. The business community in this country is supported by some \$14 billion annually of federal government subsidies, tax write-offs, and assistance. If we can support the business community with over \$14 billion a year, there is no reason why we should not put up a few more dollars to support agriculture in Canada. I hope that the Government will be receptive to that message and will increase the pot rather than contract and restrict the pot in terms of money to support agriculture.

I have said many times that we need a deficiency payment. We need a large deficiency payment and we need it because of the trade wars between the Europeans and the Americans. South of the border, the American farmer is guaranteed