

*Family Farm*

**Mr. Lessard:** Hon. members must remember the kind of revenue that accrued to farmers in 1973. Let us remember that we passed a bill in the House permitting western farmers to defer tax on their current year's revenue until next year.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Lessard:** Is the member ready to accept that farmers should have their previous revenue added to the present year's revenue, and thus have to pay higher taxes? Certainly not. Never has a government done so much, so fast, to solve the situation. Perhaps the hon. member does not remember those years, but many hon. members here do. If he wants me to answer the question about what the government will do to assist the western farmers to recoup what he calls a loss, let me tell him that it was not a loss.

**Mr. Nowlan:** Mr. Speaker—

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Nowlan:**—I do not understand the reason for the catcalls on the other side. I think that they are looking for Santa Claus in the chimney and he is not there yet. I am not prepared, as a member of the House, to listen to a bunch of gosh-darn frivolity in reply to a sane, sensible and serious question.

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Nowlan:** I believe that the hon. member for Lessard—

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**An hon. Member:** Lac-Saint-Jean.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Nowlan:**—the hon. member for Lac-Saint-Jean (Mr. Lessard) made a very uneloquent exposition regarding the situation in Canada. The only problem with the hon. member is that he became lost in the water and never came to shore. He is not even in tune with the Nativity message. He does not know where the manger is, and even if he did the cows would not have him—because there are other hon. members in the House who know more about agriculture than the hon. member for Lac-Saint-Jean. One of them is the hon. member for Wetaskiwin (Mr. Schellenberger). I say that, instead of hearing this frivolity from the hon. member for Lac-Saint-Jean, we should hear other members who can give a full, clear and objective discourse on the problems of agriculture in Canada. That is my point.

● (1650)

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order. This is a question of privilege on which the Chair might be permitted to meditate during the Noel season. In the meantime I recognize the hon. member for Lac-Saint-Jean for the conclusion of his speech.

**Mr. Lessard:** Mr. Speaker, I would just like to say one word about the hon. member for Annapolis Valley (Mr. Nowlan). There are hon. members who are highly quali-

fied to speak about agriculture. I hope he knows enough to disqualify himself from being one of their number. Knowing the hon. member for many years in this House, I think he should be left out of that group.

Returning to the constituency of Lac-Saint-Jean, the name does not imply that we have only a lake there. There is quite a piece of land in the constituency and I have lived and worked with farmers for many years so I know enough to appreciate their work and problems. I admit that I am not an expert. I do not pretend to be one. Having listened over the years to all kinds of forecasts from supposed experts in this House, particularly those on the opposition benches, I can say that the results up until now have not been good. In fact, opposition forecasts have frequently been wrong. With respect to expertise, I say that we should rely much more heavily upon members of the government front benches.

[*Translation*]

I would like to conclude my remarks, but as agriculture is a most interesting subject and as I express myself more easily in my mother tongue, I would prefer obviously to go back to French and summarize the situation a little. I would say that the measures which have precisely enabled agriculture to get better results within the last few years were put forward by a former Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Olson) who is no longer in the House. Such measures were improved by another Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Whelan), by a minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board (Mr. Lang) and by a government which, day after day, through positive policies and action has allowed agriculture to become more viable. In order to solve the fundamental problem, namely that farmers may stay on farms, they would have to be assured—

[*English*]

**Mr. Yewchuk:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is clearly abusing the rules of the House. He has been speaking for nearly 15 minutes in response to a question. We have other members who wish to speak in this debate. I wish there were some way of shutting him up.

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Speaker:** May we have order, please. My understanding is that the hon. member for Lac-Saint-Jean (Mr. Lessard) has the floor for 20 minutes under the Standing Order, and I am advised that there are two minutes left to him.

**Mr. Lessard:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker; and I intend to use my full time.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, I would like to point out in those two minutes that one measure among others has been put forward by the government to control rural depopulation and it is the policy for the development of small farms. If we consider how the provinces have used that policy up to now, what were the first provinces to sign those agreements, we note that there were the western provinces, because they are perhaps more active in that field with the agreement of provincial governments, as they saw in that