

Adjournment Debate

Mr. Stan J. Hovdebo (Saskatoon—Humboldt): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the New Democratic Party, we would also agree with the withdrawal. My particular concern had been trying to balance between the freedom of information and the use that can be made of this kind of request for papers by parliamentarians which other people in Canada do not have. Under the circumstances, I see no problem in agreeing to the withdrawal of the motion.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I gather there is unanimous consent to allow the hon. member for Edmonton Southeast to withdraw his motion?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Order discharged and motion withdrawn.

PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

[English]

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 is deemed to have been moved.

AGRICULTURE

Mr. John Harvard (Winnipeg St. James): Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to rise at this time and speak for the next six or seven minutes about a very serious matter that relates to many sections of this country. In this particular case I am talking about agriculture.

I could start off by asking the question: How many of us in this Chamber, how many Canadians would like to lose up to 90 per cent of their income in the year 1990? In some cases, there will be 100 per cent losses of net income. That is exactly what prairie farmers are facing in the year 1990. In my home province, it is estimated by Manitoba government economists that net farm income will drop 87 per cent. In Saskatchewan, it will drop 101 per cent.

Put in terms of figures, after taking into account living expenses such as food and clothing, the average return to a farm business in Manitoba will be just a little over \$1,300 in 1990. That is compared to over \$10,000 last year. To use an aggregate figure, net farm income in Manitoba will drop to a paltry \$37 million in 1990. That compares with \$285 million in 1989 and \$364 million in 1988.

In the face of those dreadful figures, those frightening figures, what has gone wrong? Why this terrible forecast? Well, first of all, the grain market around the world is not very strong. Again, Manitoba farm economists predict that wheat prices will drop 10 per cent this year; oats, 28 per cent; barley, 20 per cent; corn, 15 per cent and canola, 6 per cent.

Also, when it comes to special crops, there will be a decrease in prices; canary seed, 17 per cent; mustard, 8 per cent; lentils, 6 per cent; field peas, 5 per cent. Livestock prices, at best, will be stable or will experience slight increases.

On one side of the ledger, we have a soft world market, particularly in grains. But that is only part of the story. The major reason for this dreadful forecast, this drop in farm income in my province and other provinces in this year, 1990, is because of the reduction in farm supports from the federal government.

• (1710)

It is estimated that government support in the farm sector this year will drop 70 per cent. No wonder farmers are facing a crisis. No wonder the agricultural community is in disarray, because it is this government which claims that it is a great friend of the farmers. The fact of the matter is that this government has abandoned the farm community on the prairies.

Let us look at what this government has done. Take, for example, the budget of a few months ago. What did the budget do when it came to farmers? I will tell you: crop insurance, slashed \$200 million; grain and flour transportation, slashed \$60 million; rail branch line rehabilitation program, cut \$48 million; grain and crop advance payment programs, slashed \$54 million; dairy export program, cut \$12 million; commodity-based loan program, slashed \$15 million; and the Canadian Dairy Commission, cut \$10 million. That is a grand total of \$399 million. No wonder the farm community is suffering and it is because of this government.

But the situation gets even worse than that. For example, the excise tax rebate on farm fuels has been cut as of the beginning of this year. That is going to cost perhaps as much as \$900,000 extra in farm fuels to the farmer. You know, the farmer is already down and out and he is having to face this extra cost of as much as \$9,000 in farm fuels.