

Supply

the Conservative Party, the Liberal Party and the New Democratic Party, and the farm organizations, should all get together and decide that this is one way we can survive.

Mr. Nystrom: Madam Speaker, I have a short comment. I have been working with the Minister for some months now to try to establish a complaint mechanism to referee between a farmer and a farm chemical company when they are having a dispute. I wish the Minister were here because he has been kind enough to have a policy review done in his Department and there appears to be some headway made in establishing such a mechanism.

• (1730)

A number of months ago I was approached by some Saskatchewan farmers not from my riding but from the Town of Eston in the riding of the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (Mr. McKnight), in particular farmer Roger Oakland and farmer Lorne Johnston who were representing a group of Eston farmers who had a dispute with Dow Chemical over a chemical called Tordon 202C. They could not get any satisfaction because of a problem they have had with this chemical. Thus they had to go to the courts. This involved a very lengthy court case. I cannot comment on it because it is still before the courts.

I see that the Minister is now in the House. Because of this situation these farmers came up with the idea that there should be some type of a mechanism to solve disputes between a farmer and a farm chemical company when there is a problem with chemicals that malfunction, do not work, do not perform or which damage the soil or crop. Now the situation is that a farmer cannot really afford to take on a big multinational farm chemical company, or he does not have the time. I want to say that the Minister has been very co-operative in this regard. Perhaps it is even out of order to commend the Minister, I am not sure, Madam Speaker. However, not very often do we see that type of review instituted. I just want to say publicly that I am happy that there is this review going on now in Agriculture Canada with respect to some type of complaint mechanism.

I am sure we may have to start off with the industry itself setting up a voluntary mechanism procedure with full consultation with farmers and farm organizations as a first step toward an official mechanism or a referee, which I guess might be another way of putting it. I think we will make some progress on this issue. It is an example of a number of Saskatchewan farmers having got together with a good idea. I suppose there is nothing more powerful than an idea whose time has come. It shows that these farmers, when they push their ideas and do their research, are able to persuade officials in the Department of Agriculture that they have ideas well worth looking at. Hopefully, before not too long the farmers of the country will have an independent referee who will settle disputes between farm chemical companies and farmers. I wish to ask the Hon. Member for Prince Albert (Mr. Hovdebo) whether or not he would support such a fantastic idea.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): The Hon. Member for Prince Albert (Mr. Hovdebo) has one minute in which to respond.

Mr. Hovdebo: Madam Speaker, I would very definitely support such an idea. It brings up a matter on which I would like to comment. I think it is time to carry out a review of a great many of these areas, such as financial, inputs and production. The research that should be done these days should not be with respect to increasing production, since we have plenty of most of our products, but with respect to reducing the costs of production, even if we end up producing less in the end.

Hon. Alvin Hamilton (Qu'Appelle—Moose Mountain): Madam Speaker, this is a subject which I think really concerns a question of trust of the people of Canada as between the Liberal Party and the Conservative Party. With all due apologies to the NDP, this is our battle.

First, it should be made clear that this was a dangerous type of thing to have done at a time when the Canadian Wheat Board is in desperate travail trying to do its duty under the Act. I could have said that my first thought in reading this motion was that it is an attack on the Canadian Wheat Board. Under the legislation of this Parliament, the Canadian Wheat Board has the power to handle the selling of all the grain in western Canada, or at least almost all of it. I do not think that was in the minds of the Liberals. I hope it was not. What we are being asked to do is to vote no confidence in the Government if we believe that the Conservative Party has betrayed its past and its present.

In very simple terms, the Liberal record on agricultural policy has not been good over the last number of years. I have in my hand their Bible. It is entitled *Canadian Agriculture in the Seventies*. It was prepared by some of the brightest men from across the country. It was started under the Pearson administration and published in 1969 under the Trudeau administration. The Minister of the day tried to carry out its policies.

It is known to the people of western Canada that the Liberal Party under Pearson and Trudeau attempted to carry out the policies of the task force report of 1969. What are the guts of the report? It states that if one looks into the future that there is no future for farmers in Canada at all. It recommends that we get rid of two out of every three farmers. It also recommends that we reduce the acreage in western Canada to one-half in three years. That was the policy the Liberals followed from 1969 until the time they were defeated in 1979.

The Conservative record from 1957 to 1963, with respect to which we have quantitative evidence, earned the trust of the western grain farmer for the next 50 years. The Minister was rightfully upset about this motion after all the Government has done in the last two years to maintain that trust. To bring in a motion as silly and untimely as this one could be taken as an attack on the Wheat Board to which Parliament has given the right to decide what the returns will be.