

Supply

industry or the beef industry and take some jobs and production away from people who are in that farming industry.

I have spoken with a number of dairy farmers in Manitoba during the last couple of weeks. They sometimes look very jealously toward Quebec and say: "Why can we not have some of that quota? They only have one-quarter of the population and have 48 per cent of the milk quota".

I have said to them: "Why do we not solve this whole problem of separation? Why do some of you people not go and buy up some of those dairy farms in Quebec and start farming?" If we could get some of the Quebec dairy farmers into western Canada, maybe the separation issue could be solved. Maybe we could understand each other a little better.

I would much rather have some of the Quebec people come into western Canada and buy some of the grain farms than the Europeans. I make this invitation to them.

The other thing I would like to address today is some of the unfairness that they are talking about. It is not due to the agriculture practices of the farmers. It is due to some of the previous governments' overspending and over taxation. That is causing us some of the problems.

I see some of the hon. members on the other side shaking their heads. They must agree with that. If we can agree on some of these problems, maybe we can find some of the solutions.

An hon. member: The last government was no good.

Mr. Hoepfner: I agree fully with the hon. member but there was a Liberal government before that one that I would say was no good. This is a difference of opinion probably.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Alcock: I am with you.

Mr. Hoepfner: I am always encouraged when I hear hon. members turning up the tempo a bit. Newborn babies have to scream a lot to exercise their lungs so that they become healthy and viable later. I always feel very glad that I can be of assistance to some of these members.

An hon. member: Watch that—

• (1345)

Mr. Hoepfner: We are getting to them. Just give us another six months and who knows?

I was just going to address some of the unnecessary things that are happening in the farm community, which are hurting us. I would like to read part of a statement made by a witness who was before the Standing Committee on Transportation. He said: "Unnecessary costs should not be recovered from users. Industry has funded, through seaway tolls, close to \$35 million in costs that reflect labour inefficiencies, including surplus per-

sonnel and termination benefits, double taxation brought about by large corporation taxes and costs associated with tunnels and bridges in the Beauharnois Canal."

I was never aware that grain farmers in western Canada were paying for some of the maintenance costs of some of the bridges across the St. Lawrence Seaway. I find it very hard to swallow that and say it is fair. It is there and it has to be addressed. What politicians and industry are going to do about it I do not know, but it has to be addressed if we want to keep shipping our products through the seaway.

I have another bit of information I would like to read as an example. In the fall of 1990, the Laurentian Pilotage Authority, after negotiations with the pilot association with which it has contracts, agreed to increases totalling 32.12 per cent and 29.6 per cent over three years. That is at least a 10 per cent increase per year.

On the farm during those three years we have seen prices of our products decrease probably by 30 per cent. It is a real hardship for us to absorb some of these costs.

Some of these pilots earn on average from \$115,000 to \$156,000 a year for about a nine-month year. Nobody in the farming industry has some type of labour contract or wages that come close to that. This is why I am saying that some of the transportation subsidies that have been directed toward transportation are not going to the farmers. They are going to some of the inefficiencies and the high-priced labour as compared to agriculture.

I was really astounded and kind of encouraged the other day when I saw one of the Bloc members ask the question about the unfairness of the 8.9 per cent that was collected by the pilotage authorities from shippers. They received a very bad answer from the minister, as far as I was concerned, because these costs are actually borne by the shippers and later passed on to the producers or the manufacturers who use the shipping lines.

The NTA recommended that there should be a zero increase. The NTA is supposed to regulate these costs. What did this Liberal government do? It overruled it and gave them another 8.9 per cent after the 30 per cent in the last three years. These are costs that we as grain farmers have to observe; not just in shipping our products, but we also have to pay part of the costs of all the steel and all the iron ore that is shipped in to produce equipment.

Those are some of the things that are unfair as far as farmers and shippers are concerned.

I have tried to warn the seaway authorities and especially some of the people on the other side that if things do not change, if they are not turned around, and we receive a fairer equity in transportation costs, the seaway will not see much of the grain in future years that is produced in Manitoba and west.