

receiving payment and then we can institute a more realistic program of planning.

I was speaking on the telephone yesterday with the president of the Palliser Wheat Growers' Association. He told me it is now common knowledge throughout the international marketplace that Canada is no longer the logical country from which to buy wheat because of our inability to deliver and to fill the ships when they arrive. I also understand from the Palliser Wheat Growers' Association that the Canadian Wheat Board is now turning down sales of wheat because of their inability to deliver. I think the minister should comment on this situation and the facts should be placed before us.

A trade group has been studying the handling and transportation of prairie grain. What has happened to its report? Is it too embarrassing for the minister to reveal? Perhaps it is. I suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, that the problem with the grain trade today is not one of advances but of sales. I understand, also, that Iraq was in touch with the Palliser Wheat Growers' Association to see if they could assist them in the negotiation of an agreement involving 100,000 tons of wheat to be shipped to their country because they could not break through the crust of bureaucracy surrounding the Canadian Wheat Board.

This is a shame, because the success or the failure of the Prairie economy is to a large degree contingent upon the sale of wheat. When we look at the export figures for 1969, we find out that Canada for the first time in history became a net importer of agricultural products to the tune of some \$35 million. This is a horrible situation for a country like Canada, a country which has the agricultural potential, the resources, the know-how and the technology. The source of the problem in handling facilities lies with our railroads, terminal and collecting facilities.

Mr. Lang: I rise on a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: I apologize for interrupting the hon. member, but the minister is rising on a point of order.

Mr. Lang: I think I should draw to Your Honour's attention the manner in which the hon. member is straying from the bill before us. I recognize that there are three bills before the House in a group. If it is his intention to speak on them all at once, that would be a special situation. But what he is saying has nothing to do with the subject before us.

Mr. Mazankowski: May I say with all due respect, Mr. Speaker, that the sale of wheat certainly has something to do with the Prairie Grain Advance Payments Act, because if we had a minister in charge of the Wheat Board who would get off his fat fanny and provide the necessary leadership to sell and promote sales, we would not need this legislation.

Mr. Lang: We are having a record year.

Mr. Horner: Why don't you fill up the storage space?

Mr. Mazankowski: It is not a record year for the farmers of western Canada, believe me. It is a record

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deficit year for them. I suggest that the minister should go out west and do a little appraising. I am sure he would find that I am speaking the truth. The matter with which I am dealing has a great deal of bearing upon our ability to deliver.

Another thing that affects the whole question of advance payments and items relating to the sale and marketing of wheat is the Menzies report, this government's proposal, which indicated a desire to decrease the amount of grain in commercial storage and terminal storage positions. This, again, reduces the amount of cash available to the Prairie economy. I do not know exactly by how much the amount has been reduced, but it is probably in the order of 75 million to 100 million bushels, which means there is roughly \$150 million less in the Prairie economy today than there was a year ago.

The Menzies report recommends the reduction of 250 million to 300 million bushels to be carried in commercial storage positions. This might be well and good if sales were made in fact, but if they are made simply on paper, such as those to which I have referred, it will not do the western farmer much good.

This bill, as I have said, is completely in line with other pieces of agricultural legislation. These pieces of agricultural legislation, this bill included, are not in conformity with the wishes of the vast majority of producers. I warn the government that a bill like this will do very little to placate the western farmer, to alleviate the apprehension, the frustration and the disenchantment that he is experiencing under this government. A bill like this will merely disturb him.

I urge the minister responsible for the Wheat Board and the Minister of Agriculture to very seriously consider the impact that these pieces of legislation will have on western farmers, because they are experiencing a deep feeling of anxiety and of alienation. We can ill-afford such feelings at this time because we are fast approaching the situation wherein rural communities will be destroyed, and I am sure the majority of Canadians do not want to see that happen.

Both ministers responsible have a moral obligation to avert this trend. All hon. members have that obligation. These measures, including Bill C-176 and the bill that will be introduced to include rapeseed, flax and rye under the auspices of the Wheat Board are not necessarily in accordance with the wishes of the producers and I urge the minister to consider the performance of the Wheat Board and its auxiliary agencies because I think therein lies a great part of the problem. Unless the problem is solved, we can have all the cash advances in the world and we will not be a darn bit better off.

Mr. John L. Skoberg (Moose Jaw): Mr. Speaker, in rising to speak on second reading of Bill C-239 I should like first of all to refer to a statement made by the Canadian Council of Rural Development to the Canadian Agricultural Congress as follows:

Rural Canada is currently going through a period of radical adjustment.

What happens to agriculture in the 1970s will not only affect the destinies of all rural Canadians, (but will also) have con-