

throughout the prairies and particularly in Saskatchewan.

Last, I mentioned the significance of cash flow on the farm. The goods and services tax proposed by this government is going to just destroy that cash flow position of the farmer or the producer on the western prairies. We can be sure that when the people in the farm communities start to look at all of these things, decisions made by government which could be made in another way that are affecting their lives, their ability to produce food from the land, they are certainly going to have second thoughts about the way in which they direct their attention in the future.

Two days ago in the House of Commons, the Minister of Agriculture spoke to us and he had a number of interesting things to say about this bill. I would like to make a few comments on what he had to say.

• (1600)

You will recall that he was talking about the opposition holding up this legislation. Here we are into the harvest, in fact the harvest in Saskatchewan is over. The grain is in the farmers' bins and they are looking for ways to sell it. In fact, if you go out and look at those bins you will find that a lot of them are full of grain. If you go to the grain elevators you will find that they are also full. The elevators cannot take any more of the grain that is in the bins but the farmer has to sell that grain.

This government is forcing that farmer now to take an advance on grain he can't sell and actually borrow the money for the sale and pay back interest. A number of those producers are sitting there with grain that the board is not buying at this time, grain which, because we had poor weather in the fall, is now fit for feed instead of export. That grain is not going to be bought for transport now. The grain that is being purchased now by the elevators is used for our exports, our best quality grain.

So the farmer who is sitting there with feed grain is wondering how he can go to the elevator and get paid for the grain that he has grown without having to borrow the money, which is what this government is now asking him to do. I am afraid this is a situation that is intolerable and shows the ignorance of this government about the conditions on the farm and how things work.

Government Orders

Before I come back to the Minister of Agriculture I have to mention a statement made yesterday by the Minister of State for Grains and Oilseeds. He said the major hold-up in all of this is because farmers out there don't want to haul their grain in winter. He said:

There is no point in the guy hauling in the middle of winter because it is 40 below and he does not want to start his tractor, blow out the lane, get his truck going and all that. He has got his money. But if he has got to haul the grain to get his money, that helps as far as orderly marketing.

Well, I am sure there isn't a farmer out there who is going to read that statement, think about last winter when the weather was 40 below, and think "Oh, if I had not got my money then I would have shovelled out my driveway, shovelled out the road, got out to the elevator and delivered my grain because I needed the money." That is not the nature of this at all. What we are talking about is selling product when you can sell it and not having to borrow the money because the grain is in the bin and there is nothing you can do about it.

The Minister of Agriculture boasts that the limits have moved up from some \$30,000 to \$250,000. Big deal, Mr. Speaker. When you are not paying the bill you could put that up to \$500,000, make it a million dollar limit. When you are not footing the bill it makes no difference. They can claim all the credit they want on this one for boosting the limits, but when you are borrowing the money at the producer level it doesn't make any difference on that side. It is still a loan and it is still a transfer of the cost to the producer. As I have indicated, the producer at this point does not need those additional costs.

We can't forget that the payments that were going into this program before amounted to some \$27 million. When you look at the western economy, \$27 million out of that economy, no matter how you look at it, is a lot.

I also want to make a suggestion. Earlier in the House today it was said that only a few farmers take advantage of this program. This is becoming more and more typical of this government. The government says that only a few use it so it is okay.

That is what the government says about the VIA Rail users. While this debate is going on, the same debate on VIA Rail is taking place. Only 3 per cent of the Canadian population use VIA Rail so slash it by 51 per cent. What an attitude!