

Government Orders

down the wording, "to alleviate cash flow problems". That is exactly what this bill will do.

To go back again, if I can, to the member from Prince Edward—Hastings, he makes the case himself. He says that for \$2.41 invested, which is what the government does when it pays interest on a farmer's loan, that farmer receives \$12 in benefit. What he is suggesting is that nobody is going to use this program because farmers are not smart enough to know that. That is the implication that the members opposite make.

A farmer is going to make—I forgot the numbers—over \$12 for an investment of \$2.41. A farmer is going to be smart enough to do that, but he cannot do that if we do not pass this bill. The cash flow is going to be there. That same advantage as far as marketing is going to be there. It is a five to one return, as the hon. member said. All we are saying is that the farmer is going to have to pay the \$2.41 instead of the government.

Let us pass the bill. Let us get it out of second reading today. Let us take it to committee. Let us bring it back. Let us get it through as quickly as we can within reason. We are not talking about railroading it. Let us get it through as quickly as we can within reason so that the farmers can have a chance to invest \$2.41 and make the \$12 that the hon. member talks about himself.

Mr. Foster: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege because clearly when I read from the letter from Mr. Glen Findlay, the Minister of Agriculture for Manitoba, I said that he has called upon Ottawa to resume making interest free cash advances to grain producers so they can continue to pay their bills while waiting to sell their crops. The minister from Manitoba is not saying we should pass this bill. He is saying he wants interest free cash advances.

Mr. Joe McGuire (Egmont): Mr. Speaker, going back to this government's Throne Speech opening this session of Parliament, it was not kidding when it said that agriculture is a burden to the federal treasury and that it was determined to reduce that burden in a drastic way.

• (1220)

All by itself, this government will show the world how selfless it is. The government will show the way to an

unsubsidized agricultural world. It is prepared to sacrifice agriculture in Canada to show the world its good intention.

We are the only country in the world that is cutting down on the support we give to our farmers. The United States is not doing it. The Europeans are not doing it. Japan is not doing it. There is no concrete evidence that any other country is withdrawing support from its producers of food. Not only is our government withdrawing support from our farmers. It is doing so without knowing to what degree other countries, especially the U.S., are supporting their agricultural industries.

We now find ourselves in a peculiar position eight months after signing the free trade agreement. We are setting up a committee to determine what the American subsidy programs are. This is unbelievable. We signed a free trade agreement with the United States which will have a dramatic effect on our agricultural industry, both on producers and on processors, and we are making dramatic cuts through a budget without knowing to what degree the Americans are subsidizing their agricultural industry. We are just now trying to find that out.

We now know that the Americans know all about our subsidy program. Take the hog countervail action as an example. The American hog growers and the U.S. Department of Commerce know exactly how our hog industry is being assisted. Do we know how the American hog industry is being subsidized? No, we do not.

Even our tripartite stabilization agreement with hog growers which our Minister of Agriculture assured us would not be countervailable because it is an insurance program is high on the U.S. list of objections in the American countervail action. So much for ministerial assurances.

Why is our government going ahead pell mell to remove perceived irritants to the free trade agreement as it pertains to agriculture when we do not have any idea what the definition of a subsidy will be? Why is this government cutting freight rate assistance? Why is the government cutting the At and east grain and flour program? Why is the government eliminating the fuel tax rebate? Why is the crop insurance program being changed? Why are changes being made to the Farm Credit Corporation commodity-based loans?