

*Business of Supply*

with nothing negotiable but the grain that is sitting on his farm—grain he cannot sell for cash.

I want to emphasize one further point. We should not bind ourselves with red tape, rules, boards and commissions until we destroy our ability to be flexible. To function successfully in the marketplace of the world, our agencies must be flexible, in tune with world trends and demands. Canada's grain marketing agencies have forgotten this basic business requirement and this is why we find ourselves in the mess we are in today. There is evidence of this even in our domestic feed grain marketing arrangements. We spend our own feed freight assistance money importing United States corn into Ontario and Quebec while western Canada is sitting on a mountain of feed grain. It is time the government, working through all channels including the Wheat Board, got down to business in this country instead of being pre-occupied with a lot of wishful thinking, superfluous talking and announcements with which we have been plagued over the years.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** The House will recall that when the hon. member for Saskatoon-Biggar (Mr. Gleave) moved his amendment I expressed some initial misgivings about its admissibility. On reflection, I am prepared to admit it unless there are objections which I have not heard. My initial thought was that the first paragraph, dealing with deficiency payments, did raise a new question and that the amendment might have been out of order on that ground, but in the circumstances, and in view of the fact that this is an opposition day, I am prepared to give the hon. member the benefit of the doubt. On that basis, the amendment moved by the hon. member is now before the House.

**Mr. Les Benjamin (Regina-Lake Centre):** May I call it five o'clock, Mr. Speaker?

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** There is no private members' hour today.

**Mr. Benjamin:** I am sorry, Mr. Speaker.

**An hon. Member:** That is the best speech you have made yet.

**Mr. Benjamin:** You are just jealous! A few days ago I sought to initiate an emergency debate in this House concerning the use or misuse of the space available in the terminals at Thunder Bay. The Chair quite properly ruled against me, and I accepted that decision. I am pleased that the official opposition chose

[Mr. Downey.]

the topic of the plight of western agriculture today in order that we might have an opportunity to discuss this matter at some length with the government. May I say at the outset there is very little difference between the Minister without Portfolio and myself, and I suspect with all hon. members on this side, concerning the necessity to think about, plan and do something about the long term problems facing the agricultural industry generally. In relation to western agriculture, the whole system of grain handling, storage, pricing, planning, production and inventory needs to be thoroughly considered. Surely, there can be no argument on that score.

• (5:00 p.m.)

Certainly, the minister will agree that most of these items will take many months to consider. Some will take years to change. My colleagues the hon. member for Saskatoon-Biggar (Mr. Gleave) and the hon. member for Regina East (Mr. Burton) have or will deal with some of these aspects. Therefore, I should like to deal with what we must do in the interim while planning and discussing. We welcome every opportunity to co-operate with the minister and the government in order to arrive at new policies and programs.

What do we do in the interim? The farm cash income position and the whole of the economy of the three prairie provinces, as a result of low delivery quotas, have never been so bad as they are now. That is a broad statement but the facts bear it out. This is in great measure an emergency debate because an emergency situation exists.

It is incumbent upon the minister and the government to consider temporary emergency measures to deal with the present situation. We cannot just continue to accept, as we have during previous debates in this House, the admonishments of the minister that we should look at this in the long term and come up with long term answers. There has never been any argument in that regard, but the minister has not provided us with answers as to what should be done at the moment. He and his officials continue to use or misuse the idea that our grain handling system should be continued because that is the method which has been used before.

Having regard to the space at Lakehead terminals, the minister is wrong in suggesting that it is more efficient to fill that space gradually until the opening of the shipping season around the tenth or the middle of April. I make this statement partly from my