

Grain

something occurs, whether as a result of nature or of the economic system of grain handling, which is disadvantageous to the farmer. That leads people who hear about agricultural problems in the west to believe that western representatives are not worth listening to. When the hon. members' panic at one moment is gone, it is replaced by another panic the next moment.

I suggest to members from agricultural constituencies that there is a fundamental message which they should be preaching and getting across to members from central Canada and to the people of this area. They should be talking about the fundamental problems facing agriculture in a broad, economic way. There is a fundamental problem in relation to the fact that every group, bar a few in Canada, has power to adjust its income when it sees fit; yet the farmer has no such protection. This is a matter of a fundamental kind which members representing agricultural constituencies in the west should be concentrating their attention on. They should not panic about interest rates on farm credit loans, because that is a form of uneconomic farm subsidy which ignores the whole picture of real needs and costs.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Lang (Saskatoon-Humboldt): I suggest hon. members opposite are doing a disservice to their constituents in this respect.

Mr. Horner: You people would rather subsidize the banks.

Mr. Lang (Saskatoon-Humboldt): Members opposite come into the house and say they are not attacking the Wheat Board. The Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce is in this house tonight answering the charges they lay against the Wheat Board. The Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce is in constant contact with the Wheat Board about all matters. I say to hon. members opposite, and particularly the hon. member for Crowfoot (Mr. Horner) and the hon. member for Vegreville (Mr. Mazankowski), that their remarks about the service the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce is giving to the Canadian farmer are not only discourteous but are downright reprehensible.

Mr. McIntosh: You haven't heard anything yet.

Mr. Lang (Saskatoon-Humboldt): I have the honour of working closely with this minister and am able to judge far better than they [Mr. Lang.]

the quality of his service and the manner of that service to the western farmer. Only last night the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce again met with the Wheat Board. These questions are always in his mind.

Hon. members opposite have today pointed to some of the serious difficulties with which we are faced. This is the problem. There are real, serious difficulties involved in an operation as large as this and there will be times when hindsight would be a very valuable asset. I gather that the hon. member for Crowfoot has it. He suggests we might have left the wheat on the prairies because the 40 degree below weather in Edmonton is very valuable for storing wheat. There is no way in which one can foresee these things. The Wheat Board must make the best decision it can on the facts available to it when it has to make a decision. This is what the Wheat Board does.

There are serious questions which must be examined. Is the local elevator system adequate to meet the needs of today? Do we have enough terminal facilities? Can we afford more? Should we have enough facilities for peak loadings? Can we pay the price? Serious questions like these must be examined. I look forward to the examination of these questions in a thorough fashion by the National Grains Council which is being set up to look into these very matters. In this council the best minds involved in the operation of the whole grain industry will be brought to bear.

I point out to hon. members opposite that while they have been panicking, some things have been done of great merit and help to the prairie farmers. The doubling of the cash advance has been a godsend at this time. This new scheme, which comes very close to buying the wheat on the farm itself, is of tremendous help to the prairie farmer. This year, to date, \$122 million has been taken out in cash advances.

An hon. Member: That demonstrates how broke the farmers are.

Mr. Lang (Saskatoon-Humboldt): This is almost twice as much as the maximum amount ever taken out in a whole year. This program is of significant help to the western farmer.

Mr. Horner: We realize that the policy is good. After all, we brought it in.

Mr. Lang (Saskatoon-Humboldt): Members opposite panic from issue to issue. By ignor-