

*Wheat Export Prices*

people on this side of the house, particularly those who belong to this party, have offered solutions today. Let me be as brief as possible. On the short term basis, we need an immediate influx of cash into the western economy, something in the nature of \$100 million or \$200 million. We had a budget brought down in the house not long ago with a projected surplus of \$250 million. At that time I, and many of my colleagues, asked the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Olson) and the Minister of Finance (Mr. Benson) whether they might consider diverting some of this projected surplus into an emergency plan for western agriculture. We did not get an answer. They just said the government had done enough. We must inject some cash into the western economy immediately, otherwise we will be confronted with many more serious economic problems in the very near future.

Members of our party have suggested many ways of solving this problem. One possibility is the adoption of a deficiency payment of 20 cents per bushel up to about 5,000 bushels, or a payment of some sort bringing the price up to \$2 per bushel to the extent of 500, 600 or 700 acres, or perhaps a combination of these on a short-range plan to help the western economy. We must realize that we need many long-range programs. We cannot solve this situation with only short-range planning. We have to sell grain and get it to the people who need it. We must start working toward long-range credit plans and a more comprehensive trade system. We must give the farmer a better guaranteed price for grain. We should have a two-price system in respect of wheat. This has been suggested by many organizations.

Farm income has dropped by some \$430 million in 1968-69. This is why something has to be done now. As a final suggestion, I should like to recommend something which I think is unanimous in the minds of almost every western farmer. The Minister of Industry Trade and Commerce (Mr. Pepin) should resign immediately from his post as minister in charge of the Wheat Board. I respect the intelligence and the integrity of this minister, but his record thus far, and from all indications he has given to us for the future, point to the fact that he is not the man for this type of job. His resignation immediately as the man in charge of the Wheat Board represents the very least the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) could do for the western economy. Many other things must be done, but it is time the government got its head out of orbit and came down to earth.

**Mr. Don Mazankowski (Vegreville):** Mr. Speaker, despite the lateness of the hour I welcome the opportunity to participate in this debate. I shall not attempt to unduly aggravate the good spirit and mood of this house by being too lengthy in my contribution. It is because we are dealing with a matter of utmost urgency, which has progressively become a crisis, that I have been prompted to enter this debate.

After all, one might have expected that following numerous reviews, task force reviews, submissions made by numerous people, the thorough study and investigation of the Standing Committee on Agriculture when it travelled out west, and the importuning of the many western members of parliament, along with the great trip of the Prime Minister, (Mr. Trudeau) even at this late date we would have some firm policy statement by this government aimed at relieving the crisis caused by a critical shortage of cash and deteriorating prices in our farm economy.

The government should have acted long before now and made such emergency consideration of this long standing problem unnecessary. We have been in session for something like ten months, but we have had no positive or realistic approach brought forward to alleviate this urgent matter, despite the fact that we have had a continual dialogue with members involved in the farm community. Leaders of the opposition parties have been helpful in offering suggestions and solutions, nevertheless the government has failed to act. After all, the wheat problem we now face is not new. It has been with us since the bungling and the grossly inept actions of a previous Liberal government, which left the Canadian wheat producer defenseless in the world market place, when they agreed to go along with the general cereals arrangement instead of the old International Wheat Agreement, thus opening the door to almost one full year of a free world grain market.

This latest crisis, grave as it is, is only one more chapter in a long and dismal story. We all know that despite the pious submissions uttered by the amiable Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce (Mr. Pepin) on his return from Washington, Americans are realists and will trim their prices to meet market conditions. Where does the recent U.S. cut of 12 cents per bushel leave us? Sitting self-righteously on our mountains of unsold wheat. Where does this leave the producer in this climate of economic uncertainty, of rampant inflation, of high interest charges, of