

*Prairie Grain Advance Payments Act***GOVERNMENT ORDERS**

[English]

PRAIRIE GRAIN ADVANCE PAYMENTS ACT**MEASURE TO AMEND**

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. Mayer that Bill C-12, an Act to amend the Prairie Grain Advance Payments Act, be read the second time and referred to a legislative committee; and the motion of Mr. Gauthier (p. 807).

Mr. Brian White (Dauphin—Swan River): Mr. Speaker, when we broke at one o'clock we were debating a Liberal motion to end the debate. I submit that had we spent that period of time debating Bill C-12 we would probably have finished the debate by now.

As a Member of Parliament who represents a rural Manitoba riding, I believe it is very important that I be allowed to join in the debate on Bill C-12 which has such an important effect on agriculture.

I disagree with the motion to end the debate because I want to say a few words on behalf of Manitoba farmers who are approaching me because of a lack of commitment to agriculture by the Government of Manitoba. Manitoba farmers are looking to the Government for leadership in agriculture, and I sincerely believe that they are finding that leadership.

● (1530)

I would like to take a few minutes to explain briefly to the House why it is important that all Members who wish to speak on Bill C-12 be allowed to join in the debate. My Party is a friend of the farmer. One need only go back to the Speech from the Throne to see that no other Government has given agriculture the type of priority we gave it in the October 1 Speech from the Throne. The Government gave agriculture top billing because we realize its importance to the economy—in fact, not just to the western economy but to the entire Canadian economy. We acknowledge with deep concern the tremendous difficulty our farmers are facing at this time.

In the Speech from the Throne the Government said it would stick to the course set over the last two years. Over the last two years the Government has channelled benefits to the farmers of our country in excess of \$5 billion. That is a great deal of money in support of our farmers. Yet farmers are still not able to counteract the effects of huge subsidies beyond our borders.

It has been mentioned several times today that the Canadian Treasury is just not able to compete with the huge treasuries, the large populations and tax bases of the EEC and the United States. That is why two days after the Speech from the Throne the Government stuck to the course it set for itself regarding agriculture and pledged further help to our farmers.

While continuing to pursue every possible avenue at the international level aimed at restoring fairness and sanity to the

world grain trade, the Government knows that our farmers cannot wait for international solutions. Make no mistake, our Government is a world leader in attempting to solve the international problems confronting agriculture. While the situation is international in nature, nevertheless, it deeply affects Canada's producers.

On October 3 the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) announced that the federal Government had taken the lead and was putting together the largest aid package ever for our farmers. This package has been estimated to be worth over \$1 billion. However, a price-tag cannot be put on the results this measure will have for our farmers, namely, security and peace of mind.

I said that the Government is a friend of the farmer. True friendship means sticking together when times are tough and doing everything in one's power to make tough times a little easier. The Government is such a friend. One need only consider the source of this Bill C-12, that being the Government of John Diefenbaker, to know that my Party and Canadian farmers go back a long way together. Not unlike that former Conservative Government, this Conservative Government has done much for our farmers.

In our first Budget we delivered a \$500,000 capital gains tax exemption on the sale of farm property. Any Member of this House who opposes such a measure displays a real ignorance of agriculture in Canada. We introduced new flexible lending programs through the Farm Credit Corporation. We established farm debt review boards which give farmers in financial difficulty greater flexibility to negotiate ways of staying in business. I might note that such a system has been long sought after by the farmers of Canada. We amended the Western Grain Stabilization Act to trigger record pay-outs prior to spring seeding when farmers need the cash most.

There is more. There is the \$1.5 billion dairy policy; the three-party stabilization scheme for red meat producers; a doubling of cash advances under the Advance Payments for Crops Act; and a rebate program which effectively removes all federal sales and excise tax on farm fuels. These are but a few of the matters upon which the Government has acted that have directly benefited our farmers. The amendments to the Prairie Grain Advance Payments Act are just a part of the Government's over-all approach of assisting our producers; but they are a very important part. These amendments will make the Act more responsive to the current needs of farmers.

I would like to take this occasion to commend the Hon. Member for Qu'Appelle—Moose Mountain (Mr. Hamilton) for his efforts to bring the Bill before the House under Prime Minister John Diefenbaker. The Act first introduced in 1957 has served farmers well. It was introduced to assist grain producers with their cash flow when their marketing efforts were hindered because of factors beyond their control. The amendments introduced in Bill C-12 will streamline the administrative process so that the program is more responsive to farmers' immediate market requirements. For example, landlords will no longer be required to co-sign advance