

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, October 28, 1986

The House met at 11 a.m.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[Translation]

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Doug Lewis (Parliamentary Secretary to Deputy Prime Minister and President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, I ask that all questions be allowed to stand.

Mr. Speaker: Is it agreed?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

PRAIRIE GRAIN ADVANCE PAYMENTS ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

The House resumed from Tuesday, October 21, 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.

Mr. Jack Scowen (Mackenzie): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to be able to address the House today on a Bill related to western agriculture. I have been a seed grower in northeastern Saskatchewan for the past 36 years. I am familiar with the subject and, as a farmer, am pleased with the progressive changes that have been made to the Prairie Grain Advance Payments Act by the Minister.

These changes will allow the Minister to be able to implement certain policies that are more or less routine without having to go through an Order in Council. This will give the Minister an opportunity to act quickly when the need arises. Such things as eliminating the need for landlord signatures will be another regulation assisting the producer; interest rates for those in default will be more realistic; and emergency payments for unthreshed grain and others will make the Act less cumbersome to administer.

Producers who participate in both the Prairie Grain Advance Payments Act and the Advance Payments for Crops Act will be eligible to receive a total of \$30,000. A few honey

producers and maybe even wild rice producers in my constituency will benefit from this measure, as well as canola and flax growers.

The actual grain-on-hand rule change rather than prescribed tonnes per acre for the advance payment will be a help to high producing producers. Also, this change eliminates the need for a percentage of the Canadian Wheat Board initial payment to enter into the cash advance.

I was happy to see that there will be more flexibility in dealing with outstanding defaulted accounts. Maybe now a producer who is hospitalized with a serious heart attack, for example, and who cannot deliver when the quota is on will not be charged the roughly \$2,500 in interest even though he is able to deliver before the end of the crop year. This shows some common sense in this area. The Minister will be able to approve emergency grain drying advances and emergency unthreshed grain advances without Order in Council.

Again, the Minister will be taking steps immediately as the situation warrants. However, I respectfully submit that the Minister could improve the grain drying clause and assist producers greatly by making the advance as soon as the producer requests it. If grain drying were done in the early harvest season there would be better quality grain for market and less left in the field unthreshed.

I come from an area in which we have a problem with great amounts of rain in September. Wheat harvested tough in August and early September will weigh 65 pounds per bushel and will Grade No. 1 or 2 when dry, while the same wheat harvested after the rains in late October will weigh 56 to 60 pound per bushel and will Grade No. 3 or feed. The same applies to all crops. Grain drying in August and early September is also two-thirds cheaper so the producer gains both ways. The Minister would encourage better quality with more bucks in the producers' bank accounts. I will be bringing this to the attention of the committee and will be submitting an amendment at that time.

• (1110)

I would like to congratulate the Minister responsible for the Wheat Board for putting forward an excellent Bill and for the leadership he has shown in his Department. I am sure he will bring forward further constructive recommendations.

Grain producers in Canada are suffering severe financial problems due to the price war that is going on between the EEC and the U.S. In spite of what members of the Opposition are saying, however, there are some bright spots in the agricultural sectors of Canada today.