

Prairie Grain Stabilization Act

before the House, which after almost two and a half days everyone has agreed would either be unworkable or meaningless. The present amendment would have an important effect upon a series of clauses in the bill, namely clauses 3, 4 and 9 among others.

Interestingly enough, it would have a quite different effect on other clauses, and this simply highlights the danger of proposing an amendment which, though clear, would have a substantial effect on different clauses in the bill. For this additional reason, I would urge Your Honour to find that the amendment now proposed is not in order.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: If hon. members have concluded their contributions to assist the Chair, I would be prepared to make a ruling on the point of order which has been raised on the amendment proposed by the hon. member for Skeena (Mr. Howard). It might be helpful to the chamber if the Chair were to read the motion and the amendment that is before the House.

The motion proposed by the hon. member for Saskatchewan-Biggar (Mr. Gleave) reads as follows:

That Bill C-244, an act respecting the stabilization of prairie grain sale proceeds and to repeal or amend certain related statutes, be amended by adding the following to paragraph (c) of subclause (1) of clause 2 after the word "producer" in line 18 at page 1: "and after the deduction of the increased costs of production, and including stabilization payments, if any;"

The hon. member for Skeena proposes to amend that motion in the following manner:

That the amendment be amended by deleting all the words after "deduction" and substituting therefor the following: "of the amount by which the costs of production for the crop year within which a levy under section 9 is deducted exceeds the cost of production for the crop year ending on July 31, 1970".

Hon. members will recall that when this bill came on for consideration at the report stage on June 22 last, Mr. Speaker indicated some doubt about the procedural acceptability of some of the motions. In addition, the hon. minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board expressed his doubt about many of the motions, including the motion of the hon. member for Saskatchewan-Biggar which I have just read. There was, it seems to me, general agreement on the part of all hon. members at that particular time to debate the substantive aspects of the motion then before the House, and debate proceeded on that basis.

On September 22, the hon. member for Skeena proposed the amendment which I have just read, and on September 24 the Chair, having expressed some doubts about the procedural acceptability of the amendment, heard argument from several hon. members. The Chair has also heard argument from the minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board, and I want to thank all hon. members who have assisted the Chair on this procedural problem.

I might say that because my ruling will be premised on this point I think I should restate, at the outset, the proposition that the motion by the hon. member for Saskatchewan-Biggar is properly before the House for consideration. Hon. members will recall that I stated during the argument on June 22 that I was satisfied on that point. As an aside, I might say that had there not been the consent of the House to proceed, I might have taken the view that the motion of the hon. member for Saskatchewan-Biggar was not

acceptable procedurally. However, the House is now seized, by consent, with that motion, and the matter before us at this time is whether or not the amendment of the hon. member for Skeena is in order procedurally.

The question for determination, I suggest, is whether or not the amendment substitutes something new in place of the motion, or whether it merely amends the main motion. I appreciate that one must apply the rules even more strictly when dealing with an amendment to the motion. In effect, it is a subamendment because the motion amends the clause of the bill. The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Privy Council (Mr. Jerome) made an effective argument when the matter was last before the House for debate and I would find his argument very persuasive if the motion of the hon. member for Saskatchewan-Biggar were now before the Chair for consideration as to its procedural acceptability.

However, I have dealt with that point; we have accepted the motion of the hon. member for Saskatchewan-Biggar and what is now before the House for consideration is the amendment, or the subamendment if I may use that terminology, of the hon. member for Skeena.

The minister responsible for the Wheat Board has assisted the Chair and, in essence, has argued in some respects along the line taken by the Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Privy Council, particularly on the point about the difficulty that the Chair has in accepting an amendment to the interpretation clause of a bill. Indeed, the Chair would have that difficulty if we did not have before us the motion of the hon. member for Saskatchewan-Biggar. With all respect, I cannot agree with the hon. minister, who has just argued the point, that the amendment of the hon. member for Skeena should have some doubt cast upon it because it may go beyond the terms of the recommendation. I think it is probably an argument I would have no hesitation in accepting if it were made in respect of the amendment of the hon. member for Saskatchewan-Biggar. I need not repeat that I am satisfied, because of the concern of hon. members, that we are now seized with the motion, so we must deal with the matter on that basis.

• (3:50 p.m.)

Paraphrasing the situation in general terms, it seems to me that the motion by the hon. member for Saskatchewan-Biggar provides that the increased cost of production will be taken into account in determining grain sale proceeds, and the hon. member for Skeena amends this by saying that the determination of the increased costs of production shall be measured on the basis of the crop year ending on July 31, 1970. When the amendment of the hon. member for Skeena was before the House on September 14, I invited assistance from hon. members on the procedural point and indicated that at first blush, before hearing arguments, it appeared to me that the amendment might be a substitution of one procedure for another and, therefore, not acceptable procedurally because of the lack of notice as provided under Standing Order 75(5).

The hon. minister has argued today, in addition to the argument of the hon. parliamentary secretary with respect to a substitution of one procedure or principle by another, that the question of stabilization payments is one which the Chair should take into consideration. Indeed,