

Government Orders

I will describe what has been said in a few newspapers, just to give you an example of the fact that the agricultural community is certainly not looking at this in a negative way. It is looking at it in very much a positive light, hoping that this will work out.

• (1320)

For instance, in a *Globe and Mail* article of January 26, entitled "Farmers' new safety net will offer much-needed security", the following is stated:

Western Canadian grain farmers have been looking for five years for an income stabilization program that did not depend on Grant Devine's electoral needs.

That is a very apropos remark because too often we have seen programs in the past really geared to the urgent political necessity rather than the urgent farm income situation. This program, of course, if it develops the way we are all hoping it will, will not have Grant Devine's electoral needs as the system by which pay-outs are made.

The *Winnipeg Free Press* carries this headline: "Income protection for farmers is patently unfair." It states the following:

—the political debate has centred exclusively on GRIP. One argument is whether farmers' 33 per cent share of the premium is too much. Another hinges on the insured price based on a 15-year rolling average that some say will mean the guaranteed price will collapse once the high price years of the late 1970s are out of the formula.

That gets back to the point that I raised a little while ago about starting a program in difficult times, as opposed to starting it in times when things are better. Others say GRIP amounts to major off-loading of support for agriculture from the federal to the provincial governments. There is some merit to that argument as well, because in some cases the federal government has attempted in the past to shift a burden of responsibility on the provinces.

Under crop insurance and certain other stabilization programs, there has been both federal and provincial contributions. So to that extent, certainly in my own province of Ontario, the situation is different than perhaps it is in other regions of the country.

I would just read another comment which I think should be brought to your attention, and it is with respect to banking institutions. This particular article is entitled "Royal Bank Likes Program". It is from the *Western*

Producer of February 14. It quotes the chief executive officer of the Royal Bank, Allan Taylor, as saying:

The worry that the bank would grab hold of this, grab all the money for the debt, and leave nothing else so it becomes a wonderful thing for lenders and not so good for the farmers, that wouldn't happen I don't think, because—we've got to try and keep the farmers on the farm.

A number of us think that perhaps there should be legislation, to ensure that in fact that happens. However, perhaps we should consider having legislation to ensure that the banks do not grab hold of everything. Second, any kind of a good insurance program that will bring stability to the agricultural system, is bound to assist in alleviating some of the difficulties in obtaining farm financing that are encountered right now. I say to you that is of equal concern as any of the other issues in terms of obtaining financing for the continuing operation of farms. Anything that would bring that stability would be tremendously welcome, and perhaps this would.

In conclusion, then, I want to reiterate my support for the general outline that is announced in this bill, and hope that the specifics of the program as they develop in the future will be such that the optimism that we have today will be realized.

Perhaps some of that is a little bit Utopian, but nevertheless, because with the way things are in agriculture we have to give some benefit of the doubt right now and hope that things will improve very soon.

Mr. Len Taylor (The Battlefords—Meadow Lake): Mr. Speaker, I would like to say, before I begin my remarks today, that I would like to split my 20-minute time with the member for Essex—Windsor. I will speak for 10 minutes and then accept five minutes of questions. So will the member for Essex—Windsor, if that meets with your approval.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Hughes): Of course, the Speaker is in the hands of the House. I believe that there is general agreement.

Mr. Taylor: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased today and speak on Bill C-98, the legislation which provides authority to the federal government to enter into negotiations with the provinces and reach an agreement with agriculture support programs.

The programs, GRIP and NISA, the Gross Revenue Insurance Program and the Net Income Stabilization Account are becoming well known throughout the farm