

conclusion. The hon. member who moved the amendment and the hon. member for Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands (Mr. Douglas) argued the other side of the coin. With respect, however, I feel there is not opposition in principle expressed in this amendment. As I understand it, the principle of the bill relates to the proposition that there should be a transitional payment of an amount of money to the people who will benefit under the bill and that a fund should be established for further stabilization. With respect, I suggest that the amendment does not oppose the principle of the transitional payment.

The amendment asks that the bill be withdrawn and that the government consider the introduction of a new bill to increase the amount of the proposed transitional payment to \$250 million. In other words, what is proposed is an increase rather than an objection to that part of the bill. The proposed amendment would provide further that this new legislation would relate the proposed grain stabilization plan to an adequate level of farm net income which takes into account increasing costs of production. The hon. member for Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands has argued very forcefully that this is opposed to the principle of the stabilization plan and is another plan. I really cannot agree with him because on the plain wording of the proposed amendment it is requested that the new bill would relate the proposed grain stabilization plan to an adequate level of farm income. It would seem to me there is nothing in the proposed amendment which expresses opposition. It suggests a change in the grain stabilization plan but not opposition to the principle of the plan itself. Therefore, for those reasons, and under the authority I have quoted, I feel I must regretfully say I cannot accept the amendment from a procedural standpoint.

Mr. A. C. Cadieu (Meadow Lake): Mr. Speaker, in taking part in this debate today, may I say I feel this is a very important piece of legislation. I hope the minister will not see fit to run back and cry "wolf" on the Prairies as he did a week ago when we were debating a very important bill in respect of advance payments on grain. I should like to quote from a press release issued by the minister:

The Honourable Otto Lang today charged the opposition with deliberately working against the interests of prairie farmers by deliberately delaying passage of important new grains legislation.

"It is simply a filibuster, and for no apparent reason," said Mr. Lang, who is Minister Responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board. "If it continues, it could cost the western farmers 100 million dollars this year."

That is a ridiculous statement. Does the minister think that members of the opposition should sit here and let the members of the government railroad through anything they want. I should like to place on the record what would have happened here just a year ago had it not been for the official opposition. Bill C-197 would have been law had it not been for the official opposition. This is the bill which is now known as C-176, in respect of which hundreds of thousands of protests have arrived in Ottawa in the past two weeks.

Prairie Grain Stabilization Act

We can imagine what the situation would have been if that bill had become law overnight, as would have been the case had the official opposition not taken the very active part it did in opposing that legislation. Perhaps last year we were damned for our action, but today people understand what we were doing and why we did it. We objected to that legislation for perfectly good and sound reasons. This is evidenced now by the strong protests which are rolling in from western Canada in respect of this terrible legislation which would have been on the statute books today, covering cattle, hogs and everything else which the farmers certainly do not want, if the opposition had not opposed it.

● (3:00 p.m.)

I also say, Mr. Speaker, as has been said previously, that the minister is not even playing smart politics in suggesting that we must pass legislation like this forthwith. Surely it would have been better if he had come forward with an interim payment for farmers so they might have had the cash which they badly need. The minister could have called for an interim payment and produced this money for farmers, instead of attempting to throttle the opposition with the threat that if they did not permit this legislation to pass no money would be paid out.

People out west are no longer serious about this minister. One year ago he came up with the Lift program. I am sure that all hon. members remember that initially he suggested that \$140 million would be paid out under the program. Then he reduced the figure to \$100 million, and finally the government paid out \$53.7 million. I am still getting letters from poor little farmers who feel they have been gypped because they have not been getting what they are entitled to. So people out west do not think we in the opposition are crying "wolf". The people out there feel that the minister has come up the easy way in life and has never gone through the hardships that some of them went through. They will not be too hasty in climbing down somebody's throat when they think that we are working in their interests.

The farmers of western Canada badly need this money. Recently, the Canadian Federation of Agriculture presented a brief, a copy of which went to most hon. members. That federation is a responsible organization. They said in their brief:

Bill C-244, the prairie grain stabilization act, must be judged and dealt with against the reality of the depressed income position of prairie grain growers and the need for adequate measures of income protection, as well as grain receipts stabilization, not only today but in the longer term.

That shows what we are up against. If the minister has not read the brief, he should do so, because I think it would do him good and would give him some idea of just how short cash is in the west. The brief reads on page 2:

While official statistics do not separate out grain and live-stock production on a net income basis, there is little doubt that grain growers are operating on a net loss basis or close to it in western Canada. The net realized income, for example, to all of Saskatchewan agriculture was \$200 million in 1970.