

*Prairie Grain Stabilization Act*

We have also witnessed in recent days the minister's attitude in this House to the flagrant flouting of the federal law of this country by the government in its failure to carry out the provisions of the Temporary Wheat Reserves Act which are still in effect. This Act, of course, did make some contribution by the federal government to the prairie grains industry. I have made it clear when speaking on a number of occasions in this House that I acknowledge and agree that there is need for an overhaul of this legislation, that what we need is an over-all storage policy for all grains, which is a somewhat different approach. But not for one second can we go along with the type of approach put before the House by the minister, namely, simply to wipe out this legislation and to say to the farmers of western Canada, "We have no responsibility for presenting a grains storage policy. We have no responsibility to see that the prairie grain farmers do not bear the brunt of international grain competition or that prairie grain farmers do not have to compete against the treasures of other countries". Although the minister recognized this point in some of his comments, never has he recognized it in any of the proposals or policies that he has put before the House of Commons.

It seems to me that if we really wanted to find a solution to the present impasse we could do so very simply. But we are not going to be bullied into accepting the type of proposal that the government is trying to foist on this House and on the farmers of the country. Why does not the minister begin to show some sense and pay the farmers the money due to them under the Temporary Wheat Reserves Act? Why does he not split this grain stabilization bill, make these transitional payments under one bill and propose a permanent plan in a second bill? It has been made clear to the members of the government that we on this side of the House would be prepared immediately to agree to the \$100 million payment if this provision were taken out of the bill which is before us.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order. I think it would be fair if the Chair were to indicate to the hon. member who has the floor, as it did to the hon. member for Dauphin (Mr. Ritchie) who spoke immediately preceding the hon. member, that it seems the hon. member is ranging a little wide on motions Nos. 1 and 2 now before the House. If I am in error in this regard I know the hon. member will indicate to me in what respect. But when the hon. member debates more general matters perhaps he is ranging a little wider than he should at the report stage of our proceedings.

**Mr. Burton:** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the concern that has been expressed by Your Honour in attempting to deal with these motions in an orderly way. I recognize the problem Your Honour faces, but as I indicated at the outset of my remarks it did seem to me that the amendments before the House go to the very core of this debate. Without the adoption of the amendment put by my colleague from Saskatoon-Biggar (Mr. Gleave) it would be impossible to have a plan that made any sense to the western farmers or would be of any benefit to them. It seems to me that we are dealing here with a long-range picture of the prospects facing the prairie farmers.

Related to this, of course, is the question of federal contributions or assistance to the prairie grains industry

and the willingness of the federal government to stand by that industry in times of need. This in turn involves the question of the amount of money that is made available for any plan proposed in the House of Commons. This is why I was discussing the amount of money the federal government is prepared to put into its plan. Certainly this is germane to the question of taking account of increased costs of production, which is recognized in the motion moved by my colleague.

• (9:50 p.m.)

I now want to move on to further considerations involved in this bill. This afternoon the minister, in answer to a question regarding taking into account new proposals, costs of production and the net income of farmers—which is really what is involved in this amendment—indicated that if the provinces have a proposal and are willing to put up some money, the federal government will be prepared to consider it. I can only term that sort of answer as displaying a very sleazy attitude. It is a disgraceful abdication of the responsibilities of the minister, and is totally unacceptable.

This great man from the west came here three years ago. He said he was going to Ottawa to explain to the rest of Canada the needs of western Canada and of the prairie grain farmers. He is now trying to "con" the provinces into putting up some money. He knows very well this is not practicable and that the responsibility for dealing with this situation rests with the federal government. Any attempt to intimidate agencies such as provincial governments can only be classed as very despicable.

The first amendment under consideration deals with the definition section of the bill. It is important to note that clause 2(1)(c) of Bill C-244 suggests that grain sales proceeds, as the term is used in the bill, means the purchase price of grain produced on land described in a permit book and sold by a producer to a licensee after deduction of the purchase price of the grain and the lawful charges that are applicable to the grain on its sale to the licensee by the producer. The amendment moved by my colleague would add the words "and after the deduction of the increased costs of production, and including stabilization payments, if any". As was indicated, I feel this is a very critical section of the bill and that this is one of the most important amendments we have to consider at this stage. The government must give the matter serious consideration, otherwise it will completely abdicate its responsibilities.

First of all, it should be made quite clear that when one looks at the technical considerations of whether the costs of production can be determined in any sort of meaningful or adequate way, he should bear in mind that the three prairie governments have now very extensive farm management programs under way. The universities of the prairie provinces have also been engaged in such programs. They have in fact assembled data and a mass of information and figures over the past ten years which provide a substantial base upon which a meaningful determination could be made of what is involved in the costs of production in terms of developing a comparative measurement of these costs. This data is available.

I am not suggesting we have read or heard the final word in this area; we will witness further developments