Western Grain Stabilization Act

Mr. Speaker, in which we are getting the dirty end of the stick. There are many such cases we could deal with today.

At the end of his speech today the Minister gave us a wonderful message. He said he is going to do what Progressive Conservative Members and the Leader of our Party have been asking him to do from the beginning. He is going to pay out the money so that it can be used for spring seeding. The money was needed for spring seeding. Some farmers have not seeded yet because they have run out of credit at the banks. They have no more land to put up for another loan. They are either getting their friends to seed it or are not seeding at all. In May he says he is going to make an interim payment before the end of July. Do Hon. Members on that side of the House realize that crops have to be seeded in May if they are going to be harvested before the frost in the fall? You cannot wait until the first of August to plant your crops because you will then have the money to do it. That is absolute nonsense.

They are not even going to bring this change in at committee. They are going to blackball the committee and bring it in at report stage so that it cannot be debated. There will be no people there to say what they think about it. That is a wonderful, smart idea. I wonder who stayed up all night to dream that up. Mr. Speaker? There is no reason why that change should not be made in committee where it can be debated so that we can get the payment as fast as possible, rather than after a tremendous delay.

The calendar year is going to help, Mr. Speaker, but it is not going to make a great deal of difference in the triggering of pay-outs. It is going to make some difference and we thank you for that little crumb.

Why were the other things we suggested not brought in, such as the cost of machinery and production? Why is every cost of production not considered rather than only the ones set out in the Act? Some of the biggest costs of production, such as inflation and interests, are not included. They say they are going to change the Act by using the calendar year. That is another crumb. This money belongs to the farmers, Mr. Speaker. They are not getting back even the amount they paid in. Do not try to kid the troops. We know what is going on. One-third of the total amount of $900 billion belongs to the farmers.

Mr. Pepin: Indeed, one-third. You said it.

Mr. Taylor: Their interest is in that too. The total payment in 1978 was only $369 million. In those days the Government did have some honour. It said that $123 million came out of the farmers' pockets and they gave it back. The Government said it contributed $246 million and it would not give that amount back. The total was $369 million and they told the farmers that they were going to get $123 million plus the Government's share, including the interest they earned. Once it is put into that fund it is no longer government money. It belongs to the Western Grain Stabilization Fund which belongs to the farmers of western Canada. Do not try to kid the troops and tell us we are getting back more than we put into the fund. If you say that in western Canada you will be

driven out of the hall and tarred and feathered. The farmers will just not go for that kind of nonsense. Now the Government says the farmers may get $350 million out of the $900 million—almost $1 billion. That is not even one-third of the total amount, and we may not even get that.

It is no wonder that only one of a mast number of farmers who came to a meeting in Strathmore a few weeks ago would not opt out. The rest of the farmers wanted to opt out immediately, but they want their money back. They are not going to make a gift of their money to the Government. They should be getting their money back.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I will say that if the Government does not have the morality to pay money back to a farmer when he opts out, then we have left democracy behind us and are at the bottom of the garbage pail. It is no wonder that the whole group of farmers at Strathmore wanted out. Now the Government is going to be very nice. It will let them out in 1986 but will not return their money. I hope that some of the reasonable minds on that side of the House will awaken and pay back the money when a farmer opts out, or change the Act so that it will do what it is supposed to do, stabilize the incomes of western Canada.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Guilbault): Questions or comments? The Hon. Member for Saskatoon West (Mr. Hnatyshyn) on debate.

Mr. Hnatyshyn: Mr. Speaker, I am looking at the clock and I see that only a very short period of time remains. I have had informal discussions with the Government House Leader. We had hoped to hear from a few speakers today, and we intend to have this Bill pass second reading today. I was wondering whether there could be a disposition to not see four o'clock, which would give me a few minutes to make a few concluding comments on behalf of my Party with respect to this particular legislation. If that were acceptable to everyone in the House, I would like to say a few words since this affects my district very seriously.

Mr. Pinard: Mr. Speaker, I would agree to that provided that the House will adjourn at five o'clock in any case. Consequently, that will shorten the Private Member's Hour by the time required by the Hon. Member. If the private Member whose motion is to be discussed today is in agreement, that is fine. However, the decision would depend on that Member.

Mr. Waddell: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. On behalf of the NDP I can say that we are prepared to agree. We trust that the Hon. Member will not be open-ended. We know he is loquacious and feels strongly about this matter. However, I hope he could finish in 10 minutes at the outside.

Mr. Pinard: It is very clear that it will only be matter of about 10 minutes. Provided the Hon. Member does not impute motives to the Minister of Finance (Mr. Lalonde), we are in agreement.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Guilbault): Order, please. As good as this agreement seems to be, I will have to ask for