

### *Government Orders*

Elimination of the interest-free provision will effectively destroy the program and will result in an ineffectual program with minimal participation even if current advance loan levels are significantly increased.

I ask the minister, will he sit down and have that discussion? Not only did he received that letter that I quoted from, he received letters from the other 18 or 19 associations asking the minister to consider that. Will he not do that?

I realize government members have a majority. I recognize that they can do whatever they want, because if they do not have the nerve enough to put it forth before the House, they can do what they did with VIA Rail yesterday, they can do it by Order in Council. If members of their own caucus oppose it, they do not have to be embarrassed by they either not showing up or standing up and being counted as voting against it.

I find it very hard to believe that all of the members on the other side of the House can support this bill as it is before us now. I recognize all that. They have that majority. They can do it if they wish. I also state that that does not necessarily make it right or that does not necessarily make it fair.

**Mr. Mayer:** Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to the hon. member, and we have had conversations. I know he is a farmer who has had a lot of experience with various crops and I respect his views.

He makes the point that for every \$2.51 that the government invests—and I take it that is what he means by interest that the government pays on the loan—there was a return of \$12 and some cents. Surely that is a case for passing this bill. He is saying that a farmer is not smart enough to pay interest, the \$2.51, in order to earn the \$12.

If the member follows that statement to what I would think would be its logical conclusion, he should pass this bill. He is then enabling the farmer to make that investment of \$2.51 instead of the government making it on his behalf and the farmer then would earn \$12. Surely that is a good investment. By saying that they are going to dig their heels in and that they do not want to pass this bill, the member is denying that very farmer the ability to make use of the example that he just used. I wanted to point that out. Sure, we agree that interest is going to have to be paid by the farmer, but there is still a very great return there in his own numbers. I do not know

how he gets those numbers, but I take them at face value. That is a very good and cogent argument for the opposition letting this bill go through and be passed.

**Mr. Vanclief:** Mr. Speaker, as I stated several times, this is a management tool that the government has provided for the farmers to use in the past that has been cost-free to the farmers. Farmers are losing a lot. They are having a lot taken away from them.

No one likes to spend money unless a person has to spend money, yourself included, and that is quite obvious because you want to save \$27 million in assistance to the agriculture community by withdrawing that aspect of this bill. I am saying that farmers have used that provision before and they wish to continue to use it as before. If it is a good investment for the farmer, is it not a good investment for the government and agriculture as well, to show the faith that this government has had in the agricultural community? As I say, the farmers are asking what is going to be taken away from them next.

• (1210)

**Mr. Foster:** Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to compliment the hon. member for Prince Edward—Hastings. I thought he made a very good presentation why the government should not be taking away the advance payments program.

The minister responsible for grains and oilseeds suggests that somehow or other the program is not going to be destroyed. All he needs to do is talk to the executive secretary of the Ontario Corn Producers, Mr. Daynard, and he will find out that in the past something like 1,200 farmers have used the program and that the group has probably analysed the program better than any other which has been making representations to members of Parliament. The group had a board meeting last Thursday and it was calculating whether it might be as low as 50 farmers who would actually use the program. That suggests to me that, in fact, something like fewer than 5 per cent would use the program when it is only a loan guarantee that the government is providing.

The minister makes the argument that if a farmer has the cash and credit to hold the crop over the winter, he will do better. The problem is that many farmers do not have the borrowing power, after having a production loan all throughout the crop season, to get this additional funding. There is no question in anybody's mind that