

Government Orders

hide the real reasons behind the elimination of this and other agricultural programs?

I would also point out that this program was cancelled without warning, without consultation. Certainly, in the preceding election the Prime Minister or his cabinet failed to mention plans for cancelling this or other agricultural programs, undermining orderly marketing.

It was cancelled despite the fact that three government reports—and I will be fair about this, these reports did point to some structural inefficiencies in the at and east, as there are bound to be in all programs—stated in one manner or another that if the at and east was cancelled, alternative programs to encourage export milling and alternative storage facilities would need to be introduced to protect the integrity of our orderly marketing systems.

So when the government says that it is not undermining orderly marketing by cancelling the program, one really has to wonder if it has even read its own reports.

Further, if it does tend to undermine orderly marketing, has this government introduced any alternative programs to meet these goals, and will it? What the government has done is cancel the interest provisions of the Advance Payments for Crops and the Prairie Grain Advance Payments which it knows will have serious consequences on the storage situation in Canada.

Every farm group in the country attempted to tell the government to leave that program alone. The government ignored them. The implementation of the changes in that program were so bungled and dragged out by the government for so long that the Minister of Grains and Oilseeds has since admitted that not issuing advance payments for crops and prairie grain advance payments was a mistake.

At that time we were in the opposition. We repeatedly asked the government to do what the minister now admits he ought to have done. But now he calls it a mistake. A mistake for him, or a mistake for the Canadian farmers who voted for this government thinking it would act in a manner beneficial for agriculture.

Did the government learn from its mistakes? Will the minister now recognize that leaving this program in a similar legislative limbo is likewise a mistake, or will we hear so three months down the road again how the minister regrets the mistaken manner in which these changes were handled?

The government has introduced what it calls a discussion paper on the future of agriculture. A discussion paper, when after the proverbial thief in the night, it has cut this program, the at and east, drastically altered crop insurance, and eliminated the excise fuel tax rebates all in a budget costing the average farmer \$1,000 a year.

Did the government consult with the producer organizations before it cancelled the programs in the budget?

You do not have to take my word for it, Madam Speaker. Listen to what the president of the Canadian Federation of Agriculture said before the legislative committee studying Bill C-36, which is clearly true for this bill as well: "Certainly the CFA had no consultation. It was a surprise to see that particular item in the budget. I had not anticipated that item being there."

Yet the Minister of Agriculture in his green paper bemoans that there has developed, he says "an uncertain environment in which it is difficult for farmers to make long-term plans." Well perhaps instead of writing a green paper, he would have better spent his time consulting with farmers and defending their views from the knife of his colleague, the Minister of Finance, a minister who one can tell from reading his budget paper, has no idea of the purposes of the programs he is cutting.

You may very well be wondering yourself what is the principle behind this onslaught against agriculture, Madam Speaker, what principle guides it. It is a hidden agenda that is hidden no more. We have seen many of the masks this government holds, drop. Universality was the first to go, quickly followed by an Americanization of the unemployment insurance program.

In agriculture, the groundwork has begun to dismantle orderly marketing in Canada. Weak arguments and defences have been offered at the GATT to allow the government to create a defence for its lack of action, a defence that these changes are being made by a force of international sanction, that their hands are tied.