

am interested in knowing the hon. member's view as to what mechanisms should be used.

I understand the federal government is arguing that it should be a cost shared arrangement with the provinces, especially the provinces of Saskatchewan and Ontario, for corn, soybean and wheat producers.

I would be interested in hearing the hon. member's comments with regard to the initial payment and why he believes the Government of Canada has diddled since last November when the Saskatchewan Pool at its annual meeting recommended that there be at least a \$500 million cash injection. The premier talked in terms of \$500 million now and an additional \$1 billion throughout the coming crop year.

• (1810)

Why has the federal government taken so long to make up its mind, and is there going to be a payment before seeding time this spring?

Mr. Taylor: Mr. Speaker, I very much appreciate the comments and questions from the hon. member with whom I have served a number of times at committee. I always enjoy listening to questions and comments of the hon. member because he answers a good part of his own question and I share many of his thoughts on this pay-out.

One of the things I was going to say about the pay-out was that it was originally requested by the Saskatchewan Pool. The president of the pool requested quite some time ago the \$500 million pay-out.

I do not want to get into the nitty-gritty, the ins and outs of how it should be paid or to whom it should be paid. From my meetings with representatives of the pool and its members, with representatives of national farmers unions and other farmers throughout my constituency and with representatives of the political parties, I believe a number of different schemes would get these funds into the hands of farmers.

My biggest concern is not how the funds get there but that they get there. If seeding does not occur this year, we will be in serious difficulty. The only way that it will occur is for the government to take a leadership role and to provide the mechanism for the release of those funds.

I believe very strongly the words of the hon. member that the government is diddling with this issue are

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sincere. The government is certainly diddling with this issue. The essence of my remarks today were, quite frankly, that the government did not want to deal with this problem and that it was hoping that something else will occur to take it away from dealing with this problem of the farm financial crisis on the land today, both on the revenue side and on the debt side.

The problem will not go away on its own. This government has to take a leadership role and act now. That \$500 million is a minimum that Canadian farmers, in fact Saskatchewan farmers, are asking for.

Mr. Vic Althouse (Mackenzie): Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the hon. member on an excellent presentation this afternoon.

During the course of the debate we have heard government members praise the government's actions on behalf of farmers. The government states that there has been an increase of 650 per cent or some such figure in aid to farmers. Most of that aid has occurred in the past. What we have is an expert operation of the kind seen in magic shows where the magician talks us into looking at something other than the trick he is pulling.

We heard a lot from the government about all the assistance it has pulled out of the hat by way of *ad hoc* payments, but we did not hear much and we never hear very much from the government concerning the amount of money it is taking out of farmers' pockets, particularly since its re-election in November 1988.

There was something like \$200 million in the past budget and the current budget out of crop insurance, which will be pulled out of our pockets as taxpayers at the provincial level or in higher premiums at the farm level, taking something like \$25 million to \$30 million a year forever out of farmers' pockets because of the government's decision to do away with the interest-free cash advance payments programs in the west and across the rest of the country.

There were increased producer levies under the western grain stabilization program. The doubling of the increase there did not come into effect until after the election was over. Although it was known to members of the stabilization committee before the election, it did not show up at the elevator until the election was well in hand.

Also, the discontinuation of the fuel tax rebates was announced in this past budget. It will take effect over