

this time. We need to continue to improve crop insurance schemes in co-operation with the provinces. If not properly understood and carefully administered, Bill C-41 could displace the centre of gravity of the whole western grain industry. If the government wants to stabilize income out there, the taxation system might be used to that end. I hope the agricultural committee intends to hold meetings in the wheat board region to hear evidence in connection with this measure, since the bill before us is a complicated and important one.

Mr. Les Benjamin (Regina-Lake Centre): Madam Speaker, I appreciate your patience in waiting a few moments until I had arrived in my place. I shall endeavour to mind the store until ten o'clock so that on another occasion we may consider this bill at greater length.

We were told at about 5.15 this afternoon that this bill would likely be called today. I am mindful, too, that in mid-December we were told by the government House leader that it was among five or six bills which were to be given top priority and that it would be dealt with on an urgent basis. It seems to have got lost in the shuffle since then. I do not know whether the minister in charge of the Wheat Board is bringing it in now because it is my birthday—at least it will be tomorrow—but I cannot think of any other reason for the length of the delay.

The minister, in the course of his speech, went over the history of grain stabilization. I shall not review what he said because I do not wish to revive certain sore points or refer to what happened in days when the hon. gentleman's skin was somewhat thinner than it is today. I would only remind hon. members that the history of grain income stabilization proposals shows us that while all parties could probably agree on the principle that some form of income stabilization or guaranteed prices is desirable, the government has never been able to come forward with legislation which the opposition was capable of understanding or supporting, or both.

As we have already heard, this is an extremely confused piece of legislation. One has only to read pages 9, 10 and 11 to realize that no farmer, certainly no member of this House with the possible exception of the minister in charge of the Wheat Board, will be able to understand how the bill will operate or how it will be applied. That is why we should like to spend some time on it during second reading.

We believe the legislation to be sufficiently important as to justify the Standing Committee on Agriculture holding hearings in two or three dozen places in the region of Canada covered by the Wheat Board, in order that farmers may appear, both as individuals and through their organizations, ask their questions, and obtain a thorough understanding of these proposals. Close examination of the legislation suggests to me that the government will put less into this program than into others, in fact that in most years it will take more away from western farming than it will put into it.

May I call it ten o'clock?

Adjournment Debate

PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

[English]

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 40 deemed to have been moved.

HOUSING—NEIGHBOURHOOD IMPROVEMENT AND RESIDENTIAL REHABILITATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS—REQUEST FOR INCREASED FUNDS

Mr. Jack Marshall (Humber-St. George's-St. Barbe): I see we are honoured to have the minister himself here. The question which I am again debating tonight has to do with the residential rehabilitation program, a subject which I have sought to bring to the minister's attention many times before. I can only repeat in the interests of the part of Canada I represent, that the program is ideally suited to my district, one which unfortunately includes thousands of low income families to whom such a program should be directed.

The program is divided into two areas—the neighbourhood improvement program, and the rural and native housing program—under which citizens receiving incomes of \$6,000 or less can borrow up to \$5,000 to bring their homes up to a reasonable standard while taking advantage of a forgiveness factor of \$2,500 which they would not have to repay. It is almost two years since these programs were announced, and yet at this moment little or nothing has been done to direct the advantages to those who would benefit.

● (2200)

All I seem to get in reply to the many representations that I have made is a reiteration of the answer that it is up to the various provinces to designate the areas that would qualify under neighbourhood improvement, or rural and native housing programs; or, to further aggravate the situation, it is said in turn that the various municipalities have to declare occupancy standards. The other aggravating answer that I continually receive is the notion of a great decision that has to be made over the matter of declaring areas of designation as to population on some basis of priority.

The simple solution to the problem, in so far as my district is concerned, is that the whole of the province of Newfoundland should be designated, because statistics support the fact that the condition of accepted standards for homes is far below the national norm, when taking into account the numbers of homes lacking the most basic services in the province of Newfoundland.

In taking advantage of the opportunity afforded me tonight to make a plea again to the minister, since it becomes increasingly obvious, after the length of time that the programs have been in effect, that something is wrong in the thrust to initiate such a worth-while program which would help so many Canadians and most particularly those living in rural Canada, and rather than criticize the minister for the apparent lack of attention, I offer an alternative as a responsible idea to give Canadians the opportunity to take advantage of the relief features which could be to the advantage of low income Canadians. I