

*Government Orders*

same basis as grains sold on the market. It was high time this kind of coverage was available.

Mr. Speaker, there are still concerns, however, and I must say we wonder how some provinces will be able to pay their share of the premiums. For instance, a grain producing province like Saskatchewan might easily have to pay provincial premiums totalling as much as 400, 500 or 600 million dollars annually. Anyone familiar with the economy of Saskatchewan can see that would create a very serious problem for the provincial treasury. So there are some potential problems.

Another problem is timing, Mr. Speaker. I must say that introducing a bill of this kind at a time when the plan is expected to go into deficit is a problem in itself. The answer is of course that if all were well in the agricultural sector, we might not need these programs so none would be introduced. Unfortunately, there is some truth in that. If we set up a stabilization program when times are good, automatically, funds will be deposited in the plan that will stay there, to be used during the lean years. The trouble is that when we start a program of this kind during the lean years, then either we have a plan that goes into deficit from the word go, or otherwise, we have premiums that are far too high because we are right in the middle of those lean years.

I realize it is rather difficult to get around this problem, and there are people who suggest waiting until things improve before setting up a program of this kind. However, that line of reasoning would be pretty hard to sell, and I don't intend to try, but my point was that we do have this problem right now, when we are about to start up these programs.

[*English*]

The government is telling us of the tremendous contribution that it is making to agriculture generally. I know that you, Mr. Speaker, being the non-partisan person that you are, know far better than that, because the Speaker is a totally objective person and is able to see through the kind of government rhetoric that some of us are subjected to from time to time.

The government has cut some \$1.8 billion of expenditures and funding toward agricultural support programs during 1987 and 1988: \$1.1 billion in 1987 and approximately \$850 million in 1988. We cannot believe every-

thing that the government says, and I know, Mr. Speaker, that you are so objective that you have already detected that in your non-partisan position in the chair where you now sit.

The government has included certain sums in this year's budget, but you will obviously recognize that agriculture is still at a net loss, if you calculate the amount that was put in this year's budget and subtract that from the cutbacks of the previous years. You can see that all is not well in the area of agriculture in terms of the help that it is getting from the federal government.

We have just finished talking briefly about GRIP. The other one is the NISA program. That particular program is not nearly as universally acclaimed as the first one that I have just described. As a matter of fact, I had occasion lately to travel to different parts of the country as part of the famous Liberal task force on the economy. I am sure you have heard of it, Mr. Speaker, because it did such excellent work throughout Canada. This Liberal task force heard representations from various groups.

[*Translation*]

On of these briefs was presented to us by Quebec farmers. And they argued that as far as they were concerned, the NISA program, RARB in French, was nothing more than a Registered Retirement Savings Plan for higher income farmers. Such was the view expressed by a few farmers group. While I do not agree entirely with them, I do think that we should listen to their grievances and complains because it is obvious that farmers want fair programs which will be sufficiently supported to serve the needs of the Canadian population.

In any case, during the hearings held by the liberal caucus task force, a few weeks ago, in Montréal and in Quebec City, farming groups of that province aired negative criticisms about the NISA program while commending the other program, the CSRN or the GRIP as it is better known in English.

[*English*]

A number of Canadians have spoken in favour of this general program. Again I state that it is a general program. It is an outline, if you wish, because there are specific agreements that have to be signed in the future.