

Agricultural Stabilization Act

cial Governments and federal Governments could meet to bargain, discuss and negotiate to arrive at a proposal which would provide a stabilization program that would cover the agreed to commodities in those agreeing provinces. The federal Government would participate by paying one-third of the premiums. However, the most noteworthy amendment put by the Minister in an effort, we were told, to go some way toward meeting the problems of the so-called minority of provinces, was a different proposition. As when the original Bill went through the House at second reading, it permits the tripartite discussions to take place, but the Minister has added something that he feels will look after everything. I will read this amendment into the record so that you may make up your own mind about it, Mr. Speaker. It reads:

The Minister may enter into an agreement with a province in respect of an agricultural commodity only if he is of the opinion that such an agreement

(a) would not give to the producers of the commodity who are to be parties to the agreement or for whose benefit the agreement would be entered into, a financial advantage in the production or marketing of the commodity not enjoyed by other producers of the commodity in Canada.

Reading that, I realize that for every dollar a producer puts up in premiums, the province will put up a dollar and the federal Government will put up a dollar. This means that for every \$1 put up, two more come into existence. That sounds like a bit of an advantage for those who participate in the plan over those who do not. However, the Minister may veto the program if it suddenly hits him when he looks at the plan that this is what is does.

Not only can the Minister have that kind of discretion. His motion goes on to say that the Minister could stop the plan if in his opinion the agreement would be an incentive to the producers of the commodity who are to be parties to the agreement or for whose benefit the agreement would be entered into to over-produce the commodity. We know by the very nature of the agricultural community that according to economists, the economic reason for market lows is over-production. If we are going to have periods of time when there are low prices, the Minister can call it over-production and veto the program.

I have great difficulty understanding the Minister's explanation of these words. When I read them, they seem to be very clear. I think that—

Mr. Wise: That's because you and I are not lawyers, Vic.

Mr. Althouse: My lawyers tell me the same thing.

Mr. Wise: That's not what my lawyers tell me.

Mr. Althouse: I think the proposal has to be tested simply because of the force of the all Members against everyone else. However, I do not think it will be effective in responding to the trade war initiated by the U.S. I do not think it will properly address the problems that exist interprovincially. I think that we have only stirred up the hornets and the nest is now broken. We will simply have to live again with an Agricultural Stabilization Act that does not do what farmers expect it to do.

Mr. Gordon Taylor (Bow River): Mr. Speaker, I am not going to be on my feet for very long. However, there are some things that I feel should be said about this Bill.

First, I would like to remind the Hon. Member for Algoma (Mr. Foster) that this Party was in power for 10 or 15 years. When his Party was in power, we never heard about any of these new ideas he is now suggesting. Now when the Party is in opposition, Liberal Members suddenly have a great many new ideas that they are bringing forth. Why did they not bring them forth during the years they were in power? It makes me think of something somebody said which goes, "Don't do what I do, do what I say".

This Government is doing something about the problem. The Bill may not be perfect but the problem is being tackled. The Minister is putting his neck on the line and his head on the block and he is trying to do something for agriculture, the backbone industry of this country that has been neglected for 15 years. That in itself is a great step forward.

The Hon. Member for Humboldt-Lake Centre (Mr. Althouse) took such a negative view of the Bill I was surprised, because normally he has some pretty good ideas about agriculture. He is a practical man of the land. Today he reminded me of the fellow who, when he held up his whisky bottle, said, "My God, the thing is half empty". Another fellow looked at it and said, "Good, it's half full". We are doing something about the problem. I do not like the idea of Members saying that it is a failure before it even gets started. I would like to give it a chance.

I would like to deal with some of these items. First I want to say that we live in a wonderful country. I am proud to be a Canadian. I was proud to wear a Canadian uniform. Wherever I go in the world, I find that people recognize and appreciate Canadians. However, Canada is a vast country. It is far flung. One time a fellow said, "I think Canada is far flung but sometimes it's flung too far".

When dealing with problems from the Pacific to the Atlantic and from the 49th parallel to the Arctic Ocean, Ministers must get an overwhelming feeling. Each province has its own beauty and its own differences. Each province has its own ideas. Agriculture is important to every province and Territory in this country.

I do not want to leave the impression that we will not do anything about the differences between the provinces. I do not want the provinces to be all the same. However, I would like to use the differences to show that we can strengthen our nation by recognizing and dealing with our differences.

The point I would like to make is that we must recognize that Canada is composed of a lot of provinces. I am a Canadian. I come from Alberta and I was born in Alberta. When I die, I hope I will die in Alberta. I know every province. As a former Minister of Highways for Alberta it was my pleasure to spend two or three days with Ministers of Highways from every province of this great country. From that I learned that every province has its own objectives and ambitions. All the provinces want to make Canada a united and