

Prairie Grain Stabilization Act

bill as it is now before us. As your Honour has mentioned, there are two basic features of this bill. There is the feature dealing with emergency payments and the feature dealing with the stabilization plan. The emergency or transitional payments portion of this bill provides for the expenditure of \$100 million. We have proposed that consideration should be given to increasing that amount to \$250 million. I suggest, in fact, there is some difference in principle between suggesting two figures of a totally different scale or magnitude. The bill proposes \$100 million and we are suggesting that \$100 million will not do what the government thinks it will do. We are proposing a much larger figure which we think will be adequate to achieve the purpose the government has in mind in making transitional payments.

In respect of the stabilization plan, and this is really the key part of my submission, the government in Bill C-244 is not just asking Parliament to approve the principle of stabilization as such. It is not just asking Parliament to approve some guidelines for the expenditure of a certain sum of money. It has laid out very specifically, and in great detail, a particular plan it would like to see in effect. It has spelled out the formula to be used in the application of that plan. This is all spelled out in this legislation. What we are suggesting is that the plan proposed by the government is not adequate. We are suggesting guidelines and the principles which should govern the government in bringing in a new bill which we feel would be more adequate in achieving the objectives hoped for in this piece of legislation.

Mr. Lang: Mr. Speaker, I should like to deal with only two points in submitting that the amendment is clearly not in order. A reading of the amendment indicates that its basic sympathy is for the kind of bill now before the House, rather than being opposed to the principle of that bill. The suggestion that an additional amount of money is in opposition to the principle ought not to be taken seriously.

The other matter is likewise a matter of detail, and suggests a variation of a proposal in the bill. The amendment is not in opposition to the principle. I refer Your Honour to citation 389 of Beauchesne's in relation to anticipating amendments which could properly be brought before the committee. I recognize the hon. member's problem regarding the amount of money in the recommendation, but suggest that is a problem he has here as well as in the committee.

As far as the other details of the amendment are concerned, they are such that they can be raised in the committee.

● (2:50 p.m.)

Mr. Douglas: Your Honour expressed some concern as to whether the amendment opposes any principle in the legislation. It seems to me that the principle contained in Bill C-244 deals with a stabilization plan which is based on cash income over a period of years and which represents, in the opinion of those of us who support this amendment, really a redistribution of poverty and the setting of prices at levels which are completely inadequate.

[Mr. Burton.]

We are suggesting here a totally different plan. Rather than a stabilization plan, we are suggesting an income support plan which would take into consideration the increased cost of production and which would deal with net farm income rather than gross farm income. It seems to me there is a vital difference in principle. Whether one calls one a stabilization plan and the other a farm income support plan would seem to me to make a great deal of difference in respect of the principle contained in the bill on the one hand and the amendment on the other. For that reason, I believe there is a very different principle in the amendment as compared to the bill itself.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I should like to thank hon. members for their assistance on the procedural point. I am prepared to rule on it. For the benefit of hon. members, and for my own information, I should like to refer to the proposed amendment of the hon. member for Regina East (Mr. Burton) which I appreciate is an amendment at the second reading stage. The amendment is as follows:

That Bill C-244 be not now read the second time but that it be resolved that in the opinion of this House the said bill should be withdrawn and that the government should consider introducing a new bill that would increase the amount of the proposed special transitional payments to \$250 million and that would relate the proposed grain stabilization plan to an adequate level of farm net income which takes into account increasing costs of production.

The Chair did express initial concern and asked hon. members to assist it on the procedural point. I thank hon. members who have done so. My initial concern was that the amendment, at first blush in any event, did not seem to oppose the principle of the bill.

Hon. members know that the rulings and authorities in relation to reasoned amendments which may be accepted as procedurally correct by the Chair are well set out in the authorities which guide us in these matters. I might refer to the 17th Edition of Erskine May, at the bottom of page 526 and the top of page 527. I shall quote:

"Reasoned Amendment."—It is also competent for a Member who desires to place on record any special reasons for not agreeing to the second reading of a bill, to move what is known as a "reasoned amendment." This amendment is to leave out all the words in the main question after the word "that" and to add other words; and the question proposed upon the amendment is, that the words proposed to be left out stand part of the question. A reasoned amendment is placed on the paper in the form of a motion and may fall into one of several categories.

(1) It may be declaratory of some principle adverse to, or differing from, the principles, policy or provisions of the bill.

I think that is the relevant part of the citation. There is one other part that might relate to the problem before us. I refer to the second example which is given:

(2) It may express opinions as to any circumstances connected with the introduction or prosecution of the bill, or otherwise opposed to its progress.

I wish to confirm my initial thought on the matter which I expressed to hon. members. The proposed reasoned amendment does not, in fact, oppose the principle of the bill. The hon. minister has argued this point. As I indicated in my initial remarks, I have to come to this