

futures of farm families in rural communities. They disagreed with me and refused to put it in. It was only when I moved a motion on the floor of the House the government passed it because of course it was too embarrassed not to. The clause said: "The program should encourage the long-term social and economic sustainability of farm families in communities". That would not have been there if it was not for this caucus.

This government is not thinking of farm families or rural communities. It is thinking of agribusiness and to hell with little communities, to hell with some of the small farmers. This government is misdirected and misguided.

There are thousands of frustrated farmers right across this country. There are thousands of frustrated Canadians and yet the Minister of Agriculture so far has done nothing. We have had promises in the past.

The growing together initiative came out in 1989 in which the government was going to do big things for farming. We ended up with the GRIP which was a fiasco. There is nothing on farm finances. There has been nothing on the future of grain transportation. All government has really done is to continue to dismantle the Wheat Board and threaten to remove the Crow benefit without putting forth any real alternatives and any real explanation as to how those programs are going to fit into a viable and healthy future rural infrastructure and a future farm economy.

• (1040)

That is the problem we are faced with today. Until the federal government takes the initiative to develop some viable long-term programs, we are going to continue to have this problem. We cannot have emergency payments coming out every year. We are faced with that again this year. Yes, there have to be some emergency payments. Yes, we need them now. However, along with those emergency payments has to be a commitment to develop a viable, long-term agricultural program.

There has been no initiative from this government. Provincial governments are calling for it. I spoke with the Minister of Agriculture for Saskatchewan recently who said he would like to meet with the new minister. He

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would like to have some consultations with respect to new programs, but that has not been done.

I see that my time has expired. I conclude by saying that this minister has a golden opportunity. Let us hope he takes advantage of it.

Mr. Larry Schneider (Regina—Wascana): Mr. Speaker, I listened more than just a little attentively because the matter before us today concerns me since I have an agricultural background and a constituency of which 8 per cent is rural. I have spoken, perhaps, on a per capita basis more times to the rural part of my constituency than to the urban part. The story I get from the farmers I talk to is somewhat different from what the hon. member presented to us today.

Perhaps a bit of a geography lesson is in order here. The hon. member with all due respect does not have the same kind of farmland in his constituency that I have in mine. The quality of his farmland ranges from excellent to some marginal agricultural land. As a result of that, I would expect he is going to get a wide range of stories.

I suggest that he go to the Tuxford—Marquis area just north of Moose Jaw and talk to the farmers there about GRIP. Talk to those who farm in a mixed farming situation about GRIP. He will likely get the same story I do from my farmers. That is, had the Saskatchewan NDP government not tinkered with 1991 GRIP, while it was not the paved road to Mecca, it certainly was at least a document which could be taken to the bank. The banker and the farmer could predict within a reasonable proximity what the income would be for the 1992 crop year.

That is not the reality now. I know there were one or two farmers from Alberta and Manitoba quoted as saying that GRIP Manitoba and GRIP Alberta were less than ideal. I would suspect that they represent the minority of farmers from those two provinces because the same demands have not been placed on us from those two provinces. As well, I happen to know that the Minister of Agriculture has met with the provincial Minister of Agriculture and they have talked about farm programs.

The hon. member said that the NDP wishes to take a new approach to agriculture. It feels that a new approach to agriculture is necessary and it has some plans. I certainly would like to know what those plans are. They might be better expressed to the House of Commons by the hon. member than that farmer who works in his