

Prairie Grain Stabilization Act

with this sort of difficulty. I simply limit my remarks to suggesting that Your Honour look upon the responsibility of the government to see that this situation does not arise. I have urged that as strongly as I can, because this is the sort of situation which prompted the hon. member to move this amendment.

Mr. Speaker: I thank the hon. member for the opinion he has expressed and the advice which he has given the Chair. As he and other hon. members of the House know, we have had the same argument on a number of occasions since the rules have been changed. The problem to which the hon. member refers is a very real one. I am not sure that it has been compounded to any extent by changes in the rules.

• (12:30 p.m.)

The general procedure, as it affects amendments, has not changed that much. The rules, precedents and practices of the House as they apply to the form of amendments have remained substantially the same over the years, even after the rules were changed. In my view what the hon. member is attempting to do is amend a part of an act, and I would think in this way he anticipates a later stage in the proceedings on a bill. It may well be, that this kind of amendment or the idea behind it might be achieved by an amendment at the committee stage or at the report stage, but I do not think it can be done at this stage of our proceedings. Such an amendment could be either that the bill be not now read but that it be read six months hence, which would be an acceptable or reasoned amendment, or it could be an amendment which would object to the principle of the bill. However, this amendment is neither; it is a combination of the two. The hon. member does not object to the principle of the bill but objects to the principle in clause 34.

If we allowed amendments on second reading based on this premise, we would become involved in considerable difficulty because I would think it would be difficult to imagine a bill of 20, 30 or 40 clauses which would not contain a number of specific clauses with which hon. members would want to take exception. The amendment they would wish to propose would be a reasoned amendment in respect of one specific clause. I suggest to hon. members that in this way the amendment would not be in order.

The hon. member has suggested, that in the form of an *obiter dictum*, the Chair suggest to the government that we should look a little more closely at the form of the recommendation. I have done that before. The hon. member knows I have on a number of occasions expressed an opinion about the form of the Royal recommendation. As a result—and this is strictly *obiter dictum*—I do feel that perhaps what should be done is that there should be a very general recommendation, say, to the effect that His Excellency has looked at this measure and this is the measure he recommends. Then, in my view, this offers many difficulties. This is the argument suggested by the hon. member for Peace River, but I have heard other hon. members, even on his side of the House, argue just the opposite. They say that His Excel-

[Mr. Baldwin.]

lency should have a recommendation which is very detailed and that we should not go beyond what is specifically recommended to us by His Excellency. There are obviously two sides to the question. My sympathy, however, is with a simple recommendation to the effect that His Excellency the Governor General has looked at a measure and, in so far as its financial provisions are concerned, this is what he recommends to this House. Any amendment which would go beyond the terms of the bill itself, or try to impose an additional charge on the treasury, would then be out of order but anything which would be within the recommendation of His Excellency would be acceptable from a procedural standpoint.

I therefore confirm that I am in sympathy with the hon. member for Peace River in his approach to the problem. I have expressed that view before to hon. members. I am not sure whether it has been expressed to the hon. member in his capacity as House leader for Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition. I will do this in due course, and perhaps he might use his influence a bit in that capacity to see that this new procedure is adopted by His Excellency. Perhaps the hon. member in his very important capacity might be able to influence His Excellency, a former Speaker of the House of Commons, to change the form of his recommendation to the House of Commons. I am not sure whether I gave a conclusion in these rambling remarks, but the conclusion the hon. member will have suspected at least is that the amendment cannot be put.

Mr. R. N. Thompson (Red Deer): Mr. Speaker, while I am not a member of the Agriculture Committee, I do represent a constituency that is basically an agricultural producing area. I am compelled to participate in the debate at this time on the grain stabilization plan because of the tremendous concern that many people in the farming community have relating to this particular bill and the over-all program of grain price stabilization. I believe it is well that we remind ourselves of the fact that Canada is an agricultural nation. I believe it is fair to say that one hundred years ago, basically, agriculture was the most important industry in this country. Three-quarters of our people at that time were involved in agricultural production or distribution. This picture has changed in the intervening years. Today, basically Canada is urban. While it is true that now the greatest part of our population do not live in agricultural areas, agriculture is still vitally important. In fact, I think the production of food is still the basic industry of Canada.

My fear, so far as some of the measures the present government is introducing relating to agriculture, is that this very important industry might be damaged to such an extent that the whole wellbeing of the nation might be affected. Certainly, it is not just the livelihood of those engaged in agriculture with which I am concerned. I am also concerned with the more than 21½ million people who are the consumers of food. Recent statistics tell us that Canadian consumers spend over \$8 billion a year on food alone. This amounts to something like \$400 per person or about 21 per cent of all personal expenditures which can be designated for goods and services. Perhaps,