

Prairie Grain Stabilization Act

The minister may in his wisdom choose to ignore what some idiot like me or any other idiot on this side of the chamber may say about this kind of motion which seeks to deduct increased costs of production, but he also chooses to ignore what every farm organization in western Canada has said about changes that should be made to the legislation.

Mr. Rose: Why does he do that?

Mr. Benjamin: Yes, why? I find it passing strange, in view of the priority that is placed on this bill, that nowhere in the speech, consisting of one paragraph on each amendment, which he made when the bill was last before the House at report stage on June 22 did he refute or dispute any figures, facts or claims included in the briefs of the farm organizations and the government of Manitoba. When it comes to costs of production, I find it even more passing strange that the minister has received no support from his colleagues on the government side who come from the Prairie provinces.

I should like to ask, where is the hon. member for Portage (Mr. Cobbe)? He has a fair number of permit holders in his riding, but has he yet said a word either on second reading or report stage, or, for that matter, at any other stage? Where is the hon. member for Rocky Mountain (Mr. Sulatycky)?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel): Order. The hon. member is aware of the rule of relevancy. The Chair feels that his remarks at this time are going very much beyond that rule. As the Speaker himself said in a recent ruling, this rule is the cornerstone of debate in the House. I hope the hon. member will come back to the subject matter of the debate before the House.

Mr. Benjamin: I appreciate your reminder, Mr. Speaker, but with all respect I was very careful to begin my remarks by saying that not one Liberal member from western Canada has risen to his feet to speak about the incorporation into this legislation of a provision deducting increased costs of production. The hon. member for Portage has said nothing about costs of production and neither has the hon. member for Rocky Mountain who, believe it or not, has some permit holders in the Crowsnest Pass. Where is the hon. member for Provencher (Mr. Smerchanski)?

Mr. Orlikow: He is never here.

Mr. Benjamin: No. He has not said a word. Is the minister's bill so good that it does not need amendment? If the minister's bill does not need this particular amendment or the elimination of the minister's "kick" about 90 per cent of annual aggregate grain sale proceeds, then why have not some of his colleagues from the three prairie provinces risen in support of it?

There are a number of other members of the House from whom we expected to hear. There is a Liberal member from Edmonton—whatever his name is—who has not said a word on this bill, though how could he if he is never here? Then they have a member from Calgary who has plenty to say about oil companies, gas pipelines and tax bills, but I have not seen him rise in support of the minister's legislation. There are other Liberal members

from the prairie provinces who have been noticeably absent or silent.

June 22 was the last occasion when motions Nos. 1 and 2 were before the House at the report stage. On that occasion the minister made one speech which included two paragraphs, one on each amendment. He said that inclusion of the words "costs of production" contained in this amendment would render the provision unworkable, though he did not say why. As I say, he has yet to refute one single fact or statistic in the brief of the government of Manitoba which was presented to the standing committee of the House. He has yet to challenge any of their statements.

Mr. Lang: That is not true.

Mr. Benjamin: I spoke on the telephone three or four times this morning to people who were directly concerned with this submission, and the minister has yet to dispute their costs of production figures. He may dispute them in terms of accuracy, but he has not yet disputed them or refuted the suggestion that costs of production figures could have been used in this field. He cannot do this, because he has no figures of his own. Perhaps he could get some, but he has not yet done so.

• (8:30 p.m.)

The entire submission of the Manitoba government tears the minister's stabilization bill into shreds. It talks in farmers' language, but the minister has yet to refute any of it. He thinks we are bluffing, but he has not seen anything yet. If the minister thinks he is going to get agreement from the government House leader in respect of extending the time for this debate, he has another think coming, because he has no support in his own caucus. This bill is low on the government's priority list. One has only to look back to the debates on second reading, particularly on May 6, to see that he was in a big rush to get the bill through. *Hansard* of May 7 indicates that he was in a real hurry, as does *Hansard* of May 4 and May 10. No Liberal member other than the hon. gentleman for Saskatoon-Humboldt has been on his feet in support of this measure.

Mr. Lang: Your filibusters have been enough.

Mr. Benjamin: The minister is a loser. We are not going to allow the grain growers on the Prairies to be losers because of one lonely cabinet minister who cannot get the support of his own party to do the things he knows should be done.

Mr. Lang: Order. Speak to the business before the House.

Mr. Benjamin: We are going to talk about this bill and I would like another 20 minutes to go into some of the facts and figures on behalf of the grain farmers in the three prairie provinces. I should like the minister to tell us why he cannot take one of two suggested approaches in respect of costs of production figures. I readily agree with him that the costs of production figures arrived at by farm management groups are not really broad enough, but even they represent the situation more accurately than anything he has brought forward. The minister has