

• (2:40 p.m.)

The measure that the minister has put before us is an amendment to a bill that was originally passed in November of 1957. I would like to draw to the attention of the Minister another section of the bill—here I may be wrong, and if so am subject to correction—that I think needs amending in the light of experience in the repayment of cash advances. Unless there are some other regulations of which I am not aware, and I am not aware of any other amendments, section 13 of the act puts forward the instances in which a recipient is in default in repaying a cash advance.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Béchard): I regret to interrupt the hon. member but the time allotted to him has expired.

Mr. Benjamin: May I have a couple more minutes, Mr. Speaker?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Benjamin: I wanted to point out this one item to the minister so that when the bill reaches the committee he may agree with me, if I am correct on this, and agree to bring in an amendment. Section 13 illustrates the instances in which the recipient is in default in repaying the cash advance, and paragraph (c) says that if the cash advance has not been returned by December 31 in the new crop year immediately following the crop year in which the advance payment was made, or at such later date as the board may authorize in special cases, then the recipient is in default. May I suggest to the minister that a farmer who takes out the full cash advance, if he is eligible to get the full \$6,600, will be extremely unlikely to market enough grain between now and the end of December to repay the entire amount. I would like to suggest to the minister that he amend this bill further and extend the date to at least March 31 of the following crop year for the repayment of these cash advances.

I realize the board can make exceptions in special cases, but there may be so many cases that it will go beyond the realm of special, individual cases. Therefore it seems to me that extending the length of time when the repayment can be made in the new crop year to March 31 would not constitute a major change in the legislation, and the likelihood that the farmer will only get five bushels delivered at the end of July, or at the best six, and perhaps units and a one bushel quota by Christmas, will not enable him to repay

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the entire advance. Even in the case of a farmer who is not eligible for the full amount of advance payment, it just means he is farming a smaller acreage and will haul proportionately less wheat with which to repay the advance. I hope the minister will look at this measure and, if there are no other regulations or amendments to correct, that he will bring in this correction.

I close by making a final plea to my hon. friends opposite and by saying that this matter is beyond any partisan politics. If it will help, I will even say I am sorry I made the nasty remarks I did about Liberals in my speech in order to strengthen my effort to persuade the hon. gentlemen opposite, particularly those from western Canada, to mount a campaign directed at their colleagues, particularly at the Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance, to allocate not less than \$20 million and preferably \$30 million amongst the farmers of western Canada toward paying a fair cost of putting our grain crop into condition. In our opinion it is certainly a reasonable share of the cost that the rest of the nation can bear.

Mr. Craig Stewart (Marquette): Mr. Speaker, in speaking on this bill may I say I agree with the \$600 advance payments to the farmers for the purpose of drying grain, but why does it take so long to get action out of the government? It is the same old story—too little and too late.

Any member from western Canada could see the tough and damp grain situation building up early last fall. Many areas of western Canada had the wettest and poorest harvest conditions we have seen in the last 20 years. On top of this, many areas had their crops touched by early frost and the grain did not ripen properly or took longer than usual to do so. Every week in the House of Commons it was pointed out to the government that there were going to be problems getting the crop dry.

Any farmer in western Canada knows that by October, no matter how good the weather, your combine and harvest day is very short. The farmer is lucky if he can start combining before noon hour and usually, because of moisture, he has to stop by 5 or 6 p.m. This is a far shorter harvesting day than in August or September. Any person driving round western Canada in October could see by the amount of crop still in the swath that there were going to be problems. The Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Olson) made a tour of western Canada at that time and stated that