

Private Members' Business

I hope hon. members opposite vote in the true spirit of this motion and not oppose it simply because it comes from this side of the House.

I can tell you from past experience that the way the stabilization act works now is not fair. A farmer who produces his own grain for consumption by his own herd of cattle or hogs cannot be part of the program since he has to subtract what he purchased from what he sold. There is no net benefit.

However, if a farmer is the sole producer of grain, he can be involved in the stabilization program. If he is the purchaser of feeds, he cannot benefit from that.

I believe that a sale should be a sale, no matter which way it goes. As my colleague from Prince Edward—Hastings mentioned last month, whether he sells as a primary producer, whether he sells to the local grain elevator his own grain enterprise in a farming operation, a hog enterprise or a beef producing enterprise, a sale should be a sale.

The current Western Grain Stabilization Act is not fair. The agricultural industry has been waiting and asking for changes to this legislation for a long time.

I remind the House that the following organizations support this kind of move: the three prairie wheat pools, turkey producers, the Sheep Marketing Agency, the Pork Producers Marketing Board, the Milk Marketing Board, the Egg Producers Marketing Board, the chicken producers, the Canadian Pork Council, the Ontario Cattlemen's Association, the Ontario Federation of Agriculture and the UPA of Quebec which is probably the largest farm organization in Canada, as well as many other groups and individuals.

Farmers who chose to use all the grain on their farm were in effect told by the signals of the stabilization act that their type of production was no longer needed and was not appreciated. The end result was that they received less money for their grain production than their neighbour down the road. It sounds like the drought assistance program, and we all know what happened with the drought assistance program.

The mandate that the government gave the review committee referred to boundaries. The Lord knows no boundaries. Mother nature knows no boundaries.

A lot of people in my riding averaged seven bushels of beans to the acre and 48 bushels of corn to the acre when the five-year average for beans was 50 bushels and for corn 142 bushels. These people received nothing. This year for their start-up they have no funding. The program was a disaster.

The administration of the proposal in the motion will not be as difficult as members opposite will say. It has been tried in Alberta, and it is now being copied in Saskatchewan and Manitoba. The formula is there.

It could be applied under the Agricultural Stabilization Act and under the Western Grain Stabilization Act, to provide a payment for farm-fed grains.

There would no longer be discrimination against those producers who chose to feed dairy cattle, poultry or livestock on the farm.

In this House we must all be vigilant to protect our agricultural industry. It is certainly important in my riding and we wonder about the government's priorities. Kent County grows 11 per cent of Ontario's corn production. Agriculture is the strength and an attribute for my riding. In Canada agriculture is the third largest industry. As we enter a period of transition and uncertainty, we must build our strength while coping with mother nature and government cut-backs.

I believe that now our farmers not only have to worry about mother nature and the big banks, but a federal government that has abandoned them. I was pleased to host some of my colleagues last week as we met with southern Ontario marketing boards and individual farmers. Joining me were the hon. members for Lambton—Middlesex, Algoma, Prince Edward—Hastings, and Essex—Kent. We listened, and we learned. There were over 47 briefs presented that afternoon by the different organizations.

All the farm groups appreciated the opportunity to discuss the future of agriculture in Ontario and in Canada. They say that the current government is not prepared to listen to our concerns. They were quite shocked that we were there to hear their concerns, to compile their problems, and to come up with solutions for them.

A \$401 million cut to the agricultural budget is not a good sign for an industry in transition and facing uncertainty. It is why I am hopeful that government members