

Western Grain Stabilization

clause 6 of the bill. It deals with new procedures under the formula proposed. I would like you to listen, Madam Speaker, and ask yourself how anybody in the business of producing grain who is not at the same time a lawyer, an accountant or an economist, could possibly understand the bill as it is presently worded. Clause 6 reads as follows:

- (1) Subject to subsections 5(6) and (7), every person who
 - (a) is eligible to participate under this Act,
 - (b) has not elected under subsection 5
 - (1) to cease to participate and is not deemed, pursuant to subsection 8(4), to have made an election under subsection 5(2), and
 - (c) becomes an actual producer after this Act comes into force, either for the first time or subsequent to a period in which he is not an actual producer,
- becomes a full participant for the year in which he becomes an actual producer and continues to be a full participant until the end of the year in which he ceases to be an actual producer or ceases to be eligible.

● (1540)

There is nothing wrong with the Queen's English; it is a relatively intelligible language. Surely in the course of drafting this bill there could have been found a formula to make persons who would find themselves new, actual producers look at the statute and suddenly realize that they were new, actual producers. It is a complicated statute, and I have given one example. There is another example, if we turn to page 6 and look at clause 7, which deals with persons deemed to be participants—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Morin): Order, please. At this time hon. members are supposed to discuss the general principle of the bill and not particular clauses.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): Thank you very much, Madam Speaker; Your Honour just anticipated the end of the discussion. Surely one of the fundamental principles of every piece of legislation—the western grain stabilization bill being included—is that it must be understood and comprehended by those involved. With the greatest respect to the minister, this bill is so difficult that its principle will be difficult for a grain farmer to understand, even one equipped as I have mentioned.

Mr. Goodale: Oh, oh!

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): I see the hon. member for Assiniboia (Mr. Goodale) sitting back there: if he wants to make a speech in the course of this debate, he can do so.

Mr. Goodale: I already have.

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): The hon. member will have another opportunity to make a speech very shortly and I look forward to hearing him. I only hope he will stand up so that we can see him.

This bill seems to reward good fortune on the one hand, and on the other hand it seems to penalize misfortune or bad luck which may occur because of conditions in the agricultural industry over which the farmer has no control. It does not seem to me that the proper way to approach the question of stabilization is to propound in a statute a formula or succession of formulas which reward

[Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton).]

good fortune. I hope that when this matter goes to committee there will be detailed examination of those principles set forth in the formula so that this kind of thing can be rooted out of the bill.

Another problem with respect to this bill is the matter of understanding and comprehension. It is vital when discussing a bill of such importance that we not merely discuss it here or merely discuss it in the usual way in the Standing Committee on Agriculture, but that the minister undertakes the missionary work which ought to be done, that the bill be taken out of this House and sent to committee, and that the committee hears witnesses, not just those who are able to come to Ottawa to be heard but that the committee takes this case to the people involved. I mentioned earlier that not just farm organizations should be heard, as important as they are, but the committee should go into areas where individual farmers at public meetings can engage in public discussion with respect to this bill.

The government ought to be given the opportunity to do this, and I think every member of the House would agree that the committee ought to travel, when it is established, and that the message ought to be explained. It may take some time, more than it usually takes to consider a bill of this nature, but public hearings and meetings where we meet individual producers in the marketplace are important. As I said at the outset, there are three questions which must be answered before this bill is approved in principle. There are three matters which must be discussed completely so that the government has the benefit of the input which can be had from people in the marketplace, so that those who are dependent upon the produce of the western grain farmer will be heard, including the eastern farmer who produces another kind of produce, to name only one group.

These questions are pretty clear. What does the bill mean to both groups in Canada? What does it mean to consumers? What does it mean in terms of our production as part of the bread basket of the world? How will this bill operate? How will the advisory committees be established? What are their functions? How will they reach the individual farmer? What machinery will be established and how will it be funded? What is the operational nature of the bill to be? Most important in the consideration of this bill, what will be the benefit to western Canadian agriculture? At what price will that benefit be sought? What benefit will the rest of Canada receive? What effect will the bill have on our position as a world producer of food? These are questions which must be answered, and I assume there is no member in this House, regardless of where he or she comes from, who does not want this matter examined fully.

On the foregoing basis, I move, seconded by the hon. member for Huron-Middlesex (Mr. McKinley):

That Bill C-41 be not now read a second time, but that the subject matter thereof be referred to the Standing Committee on Agriculture.

Hon. Alvin Hamilton (Qu'Appelle-Moose Mountain): Madam Speaker, my remarks will be addressed to the amendment and not to the bill itself. The hon. member for Grenville-Carleton (Mr. Baker) has put forward an amendment that deserves the serious consideration of all