

Parity Prices for Farm Products Act

[*Translation*]

I believe the Hon. Member for Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead (Mr. Gérin) had the floor . . . The Hon. Member for Montreal—Sainte-Marie (Mr. Malépart), on a point of order—

Mr. Malépart: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. I just want to say that I was present when an agreement was made, and if the Hon. Member for Champlain (Mr. Champagne) doesn't mind misleading the House, I was there when he spoke, his reputation . . .

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I suggest we forget the agreements or near agreements. Resuming debate. The Hon. Member for Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead (Mr. Gérin).

Mr. Gérin: Mr. Speaker, I would like to include in my speech the comment that the Chair should have the authority to cut off Members who talk for the sake of talking, as the two Liberal Members were doing—

Mr. Rossi: Sit down—

Mr. Gérin: —because the agreement in the House was to let my hon. colleague from the New Democratic Party say what he had to say about this speech, and he will have a chance well before our time is up, and we will be able to get on with this Bill.

Mr. Rossi: You wanted to go home.

Mr. Gérin: However, I want to condemn the lack of fair play shown by the Hon. Members for Bourassa and Montreal—Sainte-Marie, who were trying to waste the time of this House and talk the Bill out, because they know we have to leave at 6 p.m.

And so to give the Hon. Member of the NDP a chance to make his speech, I ask you—

Mr. Malépart: You are capable of lying.

Mr. Gérin: —and I ask my hon. colleagues to keep quiet and refrain from any points of order until 6 p.m. so we can put this question to a vote.

Mr. Rossi: Tell the House you want to leave— You are scared.

[*English*]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I believe the Hon. Member for Yorkton—Melville has already spoken in this debate. He has a point of order?

Mr. Nystrom: I just have a very simple concern. Rather than points of order I wonder if we could not agree that—

[*Translation*]

our friend from Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead can speak to the substance of the Bill. This is very important. And we have an agreement here in the House that four Conservative

Members will be taking part in the debate and two NDP Members, the Hon. Member for Churchill (Mr. Murphy) and my friend from Regina West. With the consent of the House, my hon. friend can speak to the substance of the Bill.

An Hon. Member: Five minutes.

[*English*]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Debate. The Hon. Member for Regina West (Mr. Benjamin).

Mr. Les Benjamin (Regina West): Mr. Speaker, I will be happy to use up the balance of the time. Since you had a left ear that was not so good this afternoon I hope your left eye cannot see the clock over on this side.

Mr. Nystrom: Hear, hear!

Mr. Benjamin: Mr. Speaker, I cannot speak for Ontario or Quebec or Atlantic Canada, but if there was ever an issue dear to the hearts of farmers, some of whom supported the Conservatives, some of whom supported the Liberals, some of whom supported the CCF and the NDP, and some of whom supported the Social Credit Party, it is a system of parity prices. After listening to the Hon. Member for Edmonton West (Mr. Dorin) I can say he is lucky that the Right Hon. John Diefenbaker was not sitting in this Chamber because he would have walked across to the hon. gentleman from Edmonton West and punched him right in the nose. I remember vividly in Saskatchewan all during the late 1940s, the 1950s and early 1960s Mr. Diefenbaker saying, "The farmers, they want parity, not charity."

Mr. Reid: Well done!

Mr. Benjamin: Mr. Speaker, I was appalled when listening to the remarks of the Hon. Member for Edmonton West. He displayed an ignorance of what this Bill is all about and what the issue is that passes all understanding. The legislation has nothing to do with international trade. It has only to do with a parity price for agricultural products for human consumption in Canada. Nothing else. That would involve, for example, up to 20 per cent of our grain production used for human consumption. It has no effect on feed grain prices for hog producers or cattle producers or poultry producers. It is grain and grain products for human consumption.

A parity price now would mean an increase of five cents in the price of a loaf of bread. When you walk into a store and pay anywhere from a dollar to two dollars a loaf, five cents for farmers who are now getting less than the cost of production and cannot stay in business is surely not unreasonable. For those who grow some of the best malting barley in the world it might mean two and a half cents on a bottle of beer. A parity price for the grain farmer might amount to one-tenth of one cent on the price of a box of prepared breakfast cereal.

I do not understand the Hon. Member for Edmonton West, or for that matter the Canadian Cattlemen's Association. They