

Government Orders

I see my time is running out. The other program basically, and there are others, is NISA, the Net Income Stabilization Account. Not a lot of provinces have agreed to take that on. I agree, it is an excellent program as far as individual farmers are concerned. It is costly as far as governments are concerned.

I have some long-term concerns on that program as well. Can we, in the agricultural industry—and I hope we can—justify those types of expenditures to the rest of Canadians? It is a registered retirement type of fund. Unfortunately, it is not going to help those who are struggling in agriculture because they will not be able to put money in it. They simply will not have the dollars to deposit.

The bill is an honest and good attempt and a bill that I can support. It is going to create a situation that I know is going to require a lot of monitoring. It will require some discussion at the committee level. It disappoints me that again we have an agricultural bill brought into the House on a Monday and the government says we have to get it through in a hurry. We have done this with several other bills. I wish there was not always the urgency. This concern and this requirement has been there for some time. I wish there was not always the urgency when this comes forward.

I am hearing more and more, in the last couple of days, of individuals and groups that want to discuss this bill with the committee and I hope the government will allow the time. I know it will be encouraged to allow the time to listen to them. There is more to discuss. It is better than what we have at the present time, but it needs monitoring. It can be improved and I look forward to all of us doing that for the agrifood industry.

[Translation]

Mr. Bob Kilger (Stormont—Dundas): Madam Speaker, before I direct my comments and questions to the hon. member for Prince Edward—Hastings, I would like to say that on occasion, and probably unintentionally, the hon. member has referred to a member's being absent from the House. However, to be fair, this morning I would nevertheless like to take this opportunity to refer to the presence of the Deputy Prime Minister, the Minister responsible for Agriculture. His presence is to be commended. It shows he is interested in agriculture and also has great respect for the House and its members.

[English]

Now, to my colleague from Prince Edward—Hastings, I share his support, in principle, for the bill. I think he raised some very real concerns and we do hope that they will be addressed in committee.

• (1030)

Members in the House familiar with the member from Prince Edward—Hastings are only too familiar with his knowledge and particularly his commitment to agriculture.

I would like to ask my colleague how this legislation is being perceived and received by agriculture industry groups across Canada.

Mr. Vanclief: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question. I think in all honesty that in general it is being received quite well. However, what concerns me is that as time goes on nervousness is increasing.

I echo the sentiments of my colleague that the minister has been here for this debate and I appreciate that. But there are concerns. Probably the province that is promoting this legislation and has been for three or four months, more quickly and with more energy and enthusiasm than anyone else, is Saskatchewan and its premier. Those that follow politics know the reason for that. Mr. Devine has some problems and concerns, not only financially but otherwise. In a lighter vein, in the last 24 hours I see he does not even know what a riding is. There is some question on who represents where in the province.

I noted that one of the premier's ministers, the Minister for Rural Development in Saskatchewan, said, "farmers are not getting enough time to make an informed decision on this. The cattlemen have some concerns."

When the minister made his statement yesterday and he read that "cattlemen say that they choke on GRIP," I wondered to myself, why? Their concern points out the concern I raised a few minutes ago that this program is probably going to redistribute the cropping acreage throughout Canada. Looking at the figures, it is evident that it encourages production of some crops more than others. The beef industry is a major user, especially in