

Prairie Grain Stabilization Act

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. The hon. member for Fraser Valley East (Mr. Pringle) has the floor.

Mr. Pringle: Mr. Speaker, I do not wish to take advantage of the hon. member for Crowfoot. When he interrupted me I was reading the first paragraph.

President Walter Nelson of Avonlea said today, "The decision was not an easy one as our association does not agree with certain aspects of Bill C-244, but if it is faced with choosing between acceptance of the stabilization plan or retaining the storage-oriented Temporary Wheat Reserves Act, we must concede the new act is a big improvement."

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Pringle: To continue:

"Mr. Lang... has assured us that fullest consideration will be given to placing actual producers on the advisory board which will administer the fund," Mr. Nelson said. "This will ensure that it will be used for the benefit of the man who grows the grain, thereby enhancing our marketing position."

"In view of all the ramifications involved," Mr. Nelson added, "our association has reached agreement with several farm organizations, including the Manitoba Rapeseed Association, the Saskatchewan Rapeseed Association and the Carman Farm Business Association to make a public plea to Members of Parliament to allow Bill C-244 to come to a vote in the House."

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Pringle: We are now considering whether we should scrap the whole formula, which is based on receipts, in order to adopt, possibly, some other formula which would be extremely difficult to administer, one which I have heard described as unworkable, in my opinion properly so. The amendment to the amendment is rather meaningless. The stabilization act is applicable to wheat, oats, barley, flaxseed, rapeseed and rye and the federal government contributes at the rate of at least \$2 for every \$1 put in by producers.

A payout to producers will be made when the total receipts of grain sales fall below the five-year average. Computation of receipts is a comparatively simple matter, although some problems will certainly be attached to it. The producer board, which has been promised by the minister, and all those directly concerned will have to work out some of the details. But I am sure anyone who has been concerned in operating a business will say that it will be much simpler than any other method which has been suggested. If the point were ever reached at which consideration could be given to working on the basis of net receipts, the whole basic formula would have to be changed. There is only so much money available for this.

The minister has told producers that if they wish, they may also contribute 2 per cent of receipts from their sales of approved feed lots and other approved buyers. I presume they would have to submit cash receipts showing what sales have taken place. The bill is so designed that payments into the fund will be made by the federal government on an annual basis. Four per cent of receipts will be contributed on an annual basis and this, especially in the present year, will amount to a very large sum of money.

The grain growers of the west will also be in a position to contribute to their own future and build up a meaningful fund which could be used to advantage when they needed it. I am sure that although we buy insurance

[Mr. Horner.]

policies, we hope we will not need to collect the insurance. Similarly, we hope that sales of grain will be sufficiently large that the farmers will not have to draw upon this fund in order that the fund can grow.

• (8:20 p.m.)

Mr. Stanfield: Filibuster.

Mr. Pringle: It has been suggested by the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Stanfield) that I might be filibustering, so at this point I will close with my thanks to him, since I am sure he now wishes to call the question and have the House conclude debate on this bill.

Mr. T. C. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): Mr. Speaker, the amendment proposed by my colleague for Saskatoon-Biggar (Mr. Gleave) and the subamendment of my colleague the hon. member for Skeena (Mr. Howard) deal with the crux of the measure now before the House. They deal with the formula upon which payments under the grain stabilization act will be made, which really is what this whole controversy is about. I think there would be no difficulty in getting the agreement of this House to proceed very quickly with the legislation were the minister prepared to look sympathetically at a formula that would be more realistic and in keeping with the farmers' needs.

I have seldom heard a speech so full of unctuous self-righteousness as the one the minister delivered to the House this afternoon. According to the minister, the members who are proposing amendments are not trying to improve the legislation or serve the needs of the farmers; they are merely trying to obstruct the minister in his efforts to get the legislation through the House. It is only the minister in charge of the Wheat Board (Mr. Lang) who is interested in the farmers; every other member is trying to keep him from playing Robin Hood to the prairie farmers.

I wonder whether it has ever occurred to the minister that everybody else is out of step except him. The governments of the three prairie provinces have sent their ministers of agriculture to Ottawa to tell the minister what, in their opinion, is wrong with the formula contained in the grain stabilization legislation and why this legislation will not meet the needs of the prairie farmers.

I wonder whether it has ever occurred to the minister that all of the farm organizations have expressed their disapproval of this legislation. These organizations are not anxious to obstruct. The minister is being paranoid on this subject. The farm organizations are not plotting against the minister or against the government. I read in today's *Globe and Mail* the statements that were made by the minister. According to the *Globe and Mail*—

Mr. Lang yesterday expressed regret that prairie farmers organizations had still not said that the bill is a step forward. He said that to date no clear voice on the legislation has been heard from the west.

"I'm concerned that the issue whether this was a step forward was confused in the minds of prairie farmers by the fact that in their zeal to demand more (money) they never chose to admit that this was a step forward".

I cannot conceive of a more childish statement than that the farm organizations would not admit that this was a step forward. The minister then went on to say: