

that total the same as the new initial price after October 9, this is no valid argument to deny the producer the option to defer the adjusted payment.

The minister also suggested that the Wheat Board's extreme need for grain deliveries was not a factor in not allowing this tax deferral. I suggest it most certainly was since any farmer who made the decision to deliver early and not wait until the new year with the board's promise of deferral for his traditional price would most certainly have assumed that it would include his total initial price, that is, including the adjustment amount. Can the parliamentary secretary to the minister positively advise if regulations covering this specific situation were posted, or otherwise were available in country elevators when farmers delivered their grain this fall?

Failing a revised regulation giving the farmer the option of deferral, would the Wheat Board consider allowing this deferral provided the initial payment was also deferred; that is, both initial and adjusted payments would have to be treated the same way with the option open for both payments together?

I know the minister has received strong representation on this subject in support of the position I have just outlined from individual farmers, farm organizations, and western members of parliament on behalf of the farmers in western Canada. I hope the minister's parliamentary secretary does not respond by saying that it cannot be done because of the law or that the act would have to be changed. This is what we are here for, and it can be done. Could it be that the government is concerned about other agricultural commodity groups such as cattlemen asking for the same deferral privileges? The deferral precedent is now established so it is appropriate to ask simply "Why not?". I know the minister's parliamentary secretary was in attendance at, and spoke to, the Canada Grains Council meeting in Toronto this morning. I am sure this subject of adjustment price deferral was mentioned at that meeting. I would guess there was considerable support for the position I have taken tonight in this adjournment debate.

Mr. Ralph E. Goodale (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Transport): May I begin by saying how pleased I am to be able to respond this evening to the very pertinent and well spoken comments of my hon. friend from Medicine Hat. He raises a point of considerable concern for many western grain producers.

As he mentioned, just this morning I had the privilege to attend and represent the minister at the semi-annual meeting of the Canada Grains Council in Toronto. In a question and answer period with the delegates in attendance it was clear that this issue of deferring adjustment payments is a matter of interest to many farmers. Opinions of Canadian producers, however, differed on the subject. They varied from those who argue "defer at all costs" to those who say: "No; don't defer at all; we need the cash now." The situation is therefore not unmixed. In any contemplated deferral system it would be important to be able to distinguish the one group of producers from the other.

As the minister advised the House on October 27 we have been conducting discussions to see if and how producers could defer adjustment payment income. These

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discussions are still continuing but a practical means has not yet been found to separate those producers who wish to defer this income from those who wish to receive it as soon as possible.

About 30 per cent of deliveries in the current crop year to date have been on a deferred cash ticket basis. However, one cannot always assume because a producer has delivered on a deferred cash ticket basis that he would also wish to defer his adjustment payment. For example, it is possible that certain producers may have anticipated an adjustment to the initial price and planned their deferrals and cash flow pattern with the anticipated receipt of an adjustment payment in this taxation year in mind. Others, of course, may simply be in a cash short position and may indeed want to receive that cash as quickly as possible. Accordingly, it would have to be ascertained with each producer whether he wishes to receive or to defer his adjustment payment.

If the onus were merely placed on the producer to advise the board to defer issuance of his adjustment payment until 1976, we would of course want to ensure that each producer was aware that he had this option. I think the hon. member referred to that point in reverse fashion. Otherwise, undoubtedly there would be many cases of producers not knowing of the option until after they had received their adjustment cheques and then perhaps attempting to return cheques to the Canadian Wheat Board for deferral.

The procedure required to determine which producers wish to defer income, and to ensure that payments are made this calendar year only to those who wish payment would involve extra time and administrative costs and could perhaps make it impossible to make the adjustment payments to any producers before January 1. Generally, our problems in this regard have been aggravated by the disruption of the postal service at the present moment.

In any event I simply want to assure the hon. member that we are aware of the problem he raises. We are working on it now. I cannot guarantee a successful solution to it for the present year, although we are trying very hard. For the longer run I hope we will have a well known, well understood and well advertised mechanism in place to deal with this sort of situation before another year comes around.

CAPE BRETON DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION—REQUEST OF UNITED MINE WORKERS FOR INVESTIGATION OF MANAGEMENT OF CORPORATION—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mr. Andy Hogan (Cape Breton-East Richmond): Madam Speaker, I was glad to hear the new Minister of Regional Economic Expansion (Mr. Lessard), who is responsible for the Cape Breton Development Corporation, on Tuesday telling us that he is willing to attend a meeting between DEVCO coal people and the UMW district executive and the four local union presidents in the area to listen to the criticisms which they have published, especially in the case of the union.

In talking privately to the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau), he has made it clear to me that there will be no formal investigation of the DEVCO coal management team by his government. I therefore suggest to the minis-