stabilizing provision of the bill. I do not understand why this amendment was not supported to a greater extent. It is obvious that the payment factor is completely unrelated to the principle of the stabilization program and the provisions that are inherent within the plan. There is no doubt in the mind of anyone who looks at it from an unbiased point of view that the $100 million is merely a bribe to try to get legislation through that will actually reduce the ultimate government payout to agriculture in this country.

I should like to read some comments with regard to the $100 million payout which were presented by the Federation of Agriculture in a brief presented in reference to Bill C-244, the Stabilization Act:

> We cannot accept the assumption, as a ground rule set by the government, that to get the immediate payment the long term policy must be accepted. It is clearly and unmistakably the federal government's responsibility to ensure that the special payment is made and made soon, while also ensuring that adequate opportunity is given for the consideration, modification and improvement of the long term proposals contained in the bill.
>
> The urgent necessity of immediately supplementing the incomes of Prairies farmers is clearly seen in the disastrous figures on farm income recently released by Canada Statistics.

From page 5 of the brief I read:

> The national responsibility to protect the farmers' prices when these are especially depressed as a result of competitive subsidization, and world surpluses in relation to commercial demand.

On the same page I find the following:

> The transitional payment must be made immediately and not made conditional either upon acceptance of the rest of the bill as it stands or upon its rapid passage.

Then, the conclusion is:

—the bill is not acceptable as it now stands.

The other afternoon the minister said that one part of the bill was contingent upon the other. He knows better than that, Mr. Speaker. He is trying to mislead the public, because he knows very well that the payment of part could be put through as an estimate. The passage of such an item would take only part of a day, and the payment could be made to the farmers of this nation without accepting the principle of stabilizing their incomes at their present level. Referring to this matter of misleading the public, a press release dated May 7, 1971 issued by the minister in charge of the Wheat Board reads:

> "It is simply a filibuster, and for no apparent reason," said Mr. Lang, who is minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board. "If it continues, it could cost the western farmers $100 million this year.

As reported in *Hansard* of the same date, the minister said in this House:

> I think it important and I urge hon. members opposite to give up their constant reference to some malicious intention on the part of the government.

I say again, Mr. Speaker, that this $100 million payout is in no way contingent upon the rest of this bill. The rest of the bill is unacceptable, and this payment could be made through an item in the estimates. The farmers could have the money in their pockets within a few weeks.

The other factor of the bill which we are being asked to accept—and they are hoping that the farmers will put pressure on us to get it through—is the intent to stabilize poverty. At page 8 of their brief, the Canadian Federation of Agriculture stated:

> If not improved as we recommend, the initial impact of the act will likely be for a period to in fact reduce the level of income available to the producer, because of the deduction of the levy and the termination of the Temporary Wheat Reserves Act. Moreover, the protection afforded to the level of farm income will be altogether inadequate over time.

That is a clear statement of the situation. It is useless to talk of stabilizing farm income today when farmers are going broke and their credit is stretched tight. Then, the minister comes along and says he is going to stabilize this situation. It is just as if a group of social workers were to go into the slums of Chicago, Detroit or even New York and tell the people not to worry. These people could be sleeping in the street, and they would be told, "Don't worry; your condition could be worse. We will stabilize your present condition." That is exactly what we are saying to the farmers of western Canada in this bill. We want to stabilize their incomes at near bankruptcy levels.

• (3:20 p.m.)

Last year the incomes of farmers in western Canada were the lowest since 1955. If you bear in mind the 45 per cent erosion in the value of the dollar, you can see that this bill will only make worse what is already an intolerable situation. The government proposes paying out to the farmers of western Canada $100 million, and nobody disagrees with that. On page 5604 of *Hansard* the minister suggested why the government would not pay out under the stabilization program this year. He said in part:

> —we came to the conclusion that it would be better not to try to tie the payment to the stabilization fund formula this year. For one thing, the figures would not be available in time or in full, and for another it seemed possible this year to allow the payout to go not only to those farmers who had been marketing their full share—

In other words, the government did not have all the figures available for this year. Yet that is not the main reason, I suggest, for the $100 million figure. The government knew that if the average were based on some past years, the amount it would have to pay out would be between $200 and $250 million, and not $100 million. The latter figure has been brought about as a result of the drastic reduction in grain sales and that, in turn, reduced the averages which will come into effect when the program is implemented. Last year was one of the worst years farmers have experienced in the last 20 years. The payout will be made on the basis of this low long-term average, and that will make it more difficult for farmers to obtain more from the stabilization fund in future.