

Prairie Grain Stabilization Act

Net farm income in Saskatchewan in 1966, which is the year this program starts, was in the neighbourhood of \$580 million. In 1970 it was down to a low of \$194 million. This gives one some idea as to the level upon which the stabilization program would be based. It is based on a declining income from 1966 to 1970. The level will be very low. The Minister of Agriculture realizes the effect that "low years" will have on the bill.

As reported in the minutes of committee proceedings No. 55, the minister had this to say on Wednesday, June 2:

The stabilization program is designed to fill in the very deep valleys which can occur when a bad year follows some good ones.

I want to emphasize those words. We have experienced a series of bad years since 1966. How will the stabilization bill fill in the valleys?

An hon. Member: All bad years.

Mr. Horner: As reported at page four of the minutes of proceedings No. 55, the minister went on to say:

It does not cut down the good years except to the extent of the producers' contribution of 2 per cent. It could be as good a year as sales really make it. Our emphasis must be on sales and we are optimistic that with continued effort on sales we can see an ever-rising total in the gross receipts from grain in the prairie region.

Well, if we start off with a low in gross receipts, and we are optimistic about seeing a continuing rise in gross receipts, when is the farmer to get the \$35 million the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) talked about on television when he said farmers were going to get \$35 million this year and the year after, and so on? The minister in charge of the Wheat Board understands this program. The government is geared to getting out of paying money to the farmers of western Canada.

What has been paid under the Temporary Wheat Reserves Act? Look at Volume 58 of the committee proceedings. If anyone is in doubt as to the exact interpretation of this bill I suggest he read volumes 58 and 59 of those proceedings. At page 117 of committee report No. 58, it appears that \$79.7 million was paid out under the Temporary Wheat Reserves Act during the crop year 1968-69. Since that time the minister in charge of the Canadian Wheat Board has deliberately reduced the amount of wheat in storage, thus depriving the farmers of income that was theirs as well as their opportunity to sell their wheat. All that was paid out the following year, 1969-70, was some \$15 million.

• (5:00 p.m.)

Mr. Lang: Would the hon. member permit a question?

Mr. Horner: When I am through, I have only 20 minutes. Some \$40 million was owing in the crop year 1969-70 according to the tables presented to the committee by the Canadian Wheat Board. In addition to that \$40 million there was another \$20 million owing, making \$60 million due to the farmers on August 1, not of this year but last year. If any member doubts my word for this, let him turn to page 15 of the committee report to which I have referred, where Mr. Treleven, a representative of the Canadian Wheat Board, admitted that \$60 million was due as of August 1, 1970, of which, he said, \$40 million roughly would be applied against the 1969-70 pool account and the other \$20 million applied against the 1970-71 account.

[Mr. Horner.]

What has occurred since August 1? Another \$26 million is due for the year 1970-71. Mr. Earl, as reported at page 12 of the report, had this to say:

Of that \$60 million, again recognizing that there are two pools open, 1969-70 and 1970-71, we estimate that very roughly about \$40 million belongs to the 1969-70 pool. Now were that amount in the pool it would mean to producers in the final payment 9.5 cents a bushel.

This would mean that about 14 cents a bushel is due as of August 1, 1970 and that another 7 or 8 cents a bushel is due as of August 1, 1971. In other words, there is due about another 20 cents a bushel.

In his great lecture to the Canadian farmer last night on television, the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) did not mention the Prairie Farm Assistance Act and the \$6 million that the PFAA fund costs the federal treasury every year. In fact, he skipped a year in showing the payments under the Temporary Wheat Reserves Act and added a year to his grain stabilization program calculations. By skipping one year's payments under the Temporary Wheat Reserves Act and disregarding the PFAA payments, it was no wonder that the Prime Minister was able to present such a lopsided calculation of \$170 million as opposed to \$112 million under the respective schemes. To me, his statistics just did not add up.

Let me now look at the question whether the payment should or should not be made. It is of interest to note that this whole question was dealt with extensively in the debate before the agriculture committee, and if one were to refer to page 9 of committee proceedings No. 58—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel): Order. The Chair is finding difficulty relating the remarks of the hon. member to the amendment before the House at the present time. Hon. members have already been advised that when the House is dealing with a specific amendment they should try as much as possible to confine their remarks to the subject matter of such amendment. It seems to me the hon. member is once again opening up the question of payments to be made under some other piece of legislation, and I think he should return to the amendment before the House in accordance with instructions. The Chair had hoped that as far as possible he would do this and invites him to try to keep within the confines of the amendment.

Mr. Horner: Mr. Speaker, may I speak briefly to the point of order, though my remarks should not be counted as part of my time. The point Your Honour has raised is a valid one, but the motion and amendment seek to place the stabilization fund on a net basis, using the 1970 crop year as the basis for evaluating cost of production. I am endeavouring to support the establishment of the year 1970 as the basis, and I shall be coming to that point.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel): The Chair did not intervene when the hon. member was dealing with that specific point and trying to base an argument upon it. However, he has gone far beyond this point now and is referring to payments made to farmers under another piece of legislation and to the responsibility of the administration for that legislation. In doing so, I suggest he is opening up previous debates we have had on the subject. Therefore, his remarks do not conform to the guidelines that have been given to hon. members.