

Prairie Farm Assistance Act

act in any substantive way inasmuch as it does not extend the maximum term for repayments but, under certain conditions, it makes repayment easier. This legislation is in line with recommendations made by the dominion coal board and it is also in line with the views of the coal operators. I believe that is a summary of the principal provisions of this bill.

Mr. A. J. MacEachen (Inverness-Richmond): I regret I was not present to hear the complete statement of the Minister of Mines and Technical Surveys on introducing this bill. It is a bill to amend the Coal Production Assistance Act, a measure which in earlier days had a different name.

Hon. members may recall that shortly after the second world war the government of the day appointed a commission to investigate the needs of the Canadian coal industry. One of the recommendations made to the government arising out of that inquiry was that provision should be made to enable the coal operators to undertake extensive mechanization of their mines. That commission, as hon. members may also recall, was headed by Mr. Justice Carroll who had previously been a member of this house. Following his service in the Supreme Court of Nova Scotia, and following the presentation of this report, he returned to the House of Commons in 1949 as the member for the constituency of Inverness-Richmond.

Mr. Justice Carroll and those who collaborated with him in that report felt, at that time, that the main requirement of the coal industry, especially in Nova Scotia, was funds to allow the mines to be mechanized as they had been in the United States, with such marked results in the lowering of production costs. It might be healthy to recall how dangerous forecasting can be, because at that time, with the implementation of the recommendations of this report in the Maritime Coal Production Assistance Act it was felt that a major stride had been taken toward a solution of the difficulties of the coal industry. Under that original act, the sum of \$10 million was made available to the coal operators of the maritime provinces for mechanization purposes.

Following the grant of a very large loan in the amount of six or seven million dollars to the main operator, an extensive program of mechanization and tunnel development was laid out among various mines by the Dominion Coal Company. It is a matter of record, however, that the high hopes held out for this mechanization program have not been realized. It is also a matter of record that the loans granted to the coal operators under this legislation would not have been available

from any other source. I heard the president of the Dominion Coal Company, the late Mr. Forsyth, say on one occasion that the Dominion Coal Company would not have been able to secure such loans for the mechanization of the mines of Nova Scotia from any other source.

Mr. Speaker: Order. It being now five o'clock, the house will proceed to the consideration of private members' business as appearing on today's order paper, namely notices of motion.

PRAIRIE FARM ASSISTANCE ACT

SUGGESTED INCREASES IN BENEFITS

Mr. Hazen Argue (Assiniboia) moved:

That, in the opinion of this house, the government should consider the advisability of providing comprehensive income payments to farmers in time of crop failure by giving consideration to amending the Prairie Farm Assistance Act so as to provide: (a) an increase in the schedule of payments as follows: (i) an increase in the maximum payment from \$4 per acre to \$8 per acre; (ii) an increase in the present \$3 per acre payment to \$6 per acre; (iii) an increase in the present \$2 per acre payment to \$4 per acre; (b) an increase in farmers' contributions from 1 per cent to 2 per cent; (c) an increase in the maximum cultivated acreage on which payments may be made from 400 acres to 600 acres; and should give consideration to the provision of other appropriate amendments required to assure adequate income support in time of crop failure.

He said: I wonder if we might have this motion seconded by the hon. member for St. Boniface (Mr. Teillet)?

If this procedure is allowed, as you have already indicated, Mr. Speaker, it is evidence that improvements in prairie farm assistance have very general support. Of course, that is most appropriate since the Prairie Farm Assistance Act was brought in by a Liberal administration back in 1939. The Prairie Farm Assistance Act over the years has served prairie farmers in large parts of the prairie area very usefully.

Mr. Churchill: Will the hon. member permit a question before he gets into his introduction?

Mr. Argue: Yes.

Mr. Churchill: Would the hon. member make a note of the fact that it was through the co-operation of the hon. member for Humboldt-Melfort-Tisdale (Mr. Rapp) that his motion is coming ahead today?

Mr. Argue: That is fine. I shall be very happy to do that. I wish to acknowledge the fact that the hon. member for Humboldt-Melfort-Tisdale, at my request and in order to meet my convenience, obliged by allowing his motion to stand today so that we might go ahead with the present motion under