

Private Members' Business

severe drought losses of the previous year, the federal government reviewed the crop insurance program. As a result the program is more responsive and coverage is more extensive.

For example, before the changes to crop insurance in 1989 the payment for wheat on stubble in Saskatchewan would have ranged between \$32.23 and \$52.91 per acre, depending on the risk area. In 1989 the payment for wheat on stubble in the same risk area would range from \$49.81 to \$85.17 per acre. That is considerably higher coverage.

These changes to crop insurance demonstrate how the federal government is responding to the need for farm income stability. A bill is currently before the House which will result in further improvements to the crop insurance program. The special assistance programs I have mentioned helped farmers with assistance when it was most needed.

But as we know, providing *ad hoc* assistance is not the most desirable way to produce a sensitive, responsive safety net for Canadian grain and oilseed farmers. Farmers from all regions agree that they need a comprehensive regional safety net program which is fair to all grain and oilseed producers.

Efforts to achieve that are under way. As part of the federal government's agricultural policy review, a special committee of industry and government is working now to develop proposals for a new national grain safety net program.

The Grains Safety Net Committee was formed following a national agri-food conference in Ottawa last December. At that conference it was agreed that we had to move urgently on the development of a better safety net for grain farmers. Our Minister of Agriculture gave this issue a high priority and put it on the fast track.

This committee is looking at a number of different safety net options for grain and oilseed farmers. It is expected the committee will be ready to present its proposals to federal and provincial agriculture ministers in late spring.

The Grains Safety Net Committee is just one of many similar groups now working on agricultural issues as part of a comprehensive agricultural policy review.

Defining the problems facing farmers was the first step in this review. Now the job at hand is to develop options, consult with the industry on these options and, finally, take decisions. This applies in all areas under review: marketing, trade development and value added, financial management, safety nets, supply management, transportation, food safety and quality, and sustainable agriculture.

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Grain and oilseed farmers are among those most in need of income stabilization at this time. The federal government is responding to that need, as it has done in the past.

The federal government is clearly committed to ensuring, to the greatest extent possible, that our grain and oilseed industry remains viable and productive. Our producers have not and will not be left at the mercy of international trading practices or extraordinary weather conditions over which they have no control. The government's record is proof of its concern.

The policy review is added proof. This wide-ranging review is designed to address concerns with a view to building a healthy, prosperous future for the Canadian agri-food industry. It is the most comprehensive review of Canadian agriculture ever undertaken.

At this time it makes sense to look at the issues such as stabilization for farm-fed grain in the context of the over-all policy review. Now is not the time for piecemeal changes. Now is the time for dealing with issues in a comprehensive way. It is a way that will bring lasting benefits to all Canadian farmers.

Mr. Rex Crawford (Kent): Madam Speaker, it is certainly a pleasure to speak on this motion put forward by the hon. member for Mackenzie.

The motion only asks the government to consider doing something about the effect of paying stabilization on grain that is sold commercially but not paying stabilization on farm-fed grain.

I have to commend my colleague for bringing in a motion like this one because it is time well spent.

When you stop and look at the rationale behind the motion, you have to realize that those producers who grow their own grain are always in the same cycle. When the prices of grain are low, the livestock prices are low as well.