

*Western Canada Drought*

actions that he has taken and which the Minister of Agriculture has taken on behalf of agriculture.

What is the situation in the drought area? I have a letter in my office that I would like to show to the Hon. Member who just spoke. It is from one of the most severely stricken drought areas in southern Saskatchewan. The letter commended me personally and the Government for taking the action that was taken.

Let us take a look at the crop insurance and what a farmer would receive in the most severely stricken drought area in southern Saskatchewan or Alberta. Say a farmer was insured for \$20 an acre. He received close to \$80 an acre for every acre in the drought area that he had seeded. You will say: "Well, the Government had nothing to do with that". Let me tell Hon. Members that the Government contributed \$570 million to crop insurance, \$350 million attributed to drought and, in addition to that, \$150 million that was recommended. The Member is leaving the House. The \$150 million was recommended by the task force and paid by the Government.

**Mr. Boudria:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I am sure the Hon. Member is well aware of your very distinguished ruling in the past when you have ruled on many occasions that it is out of order to refer to the presence or absence of any Hon. Member. As we know, all Hon. Members are present in the House as we are speaking now.

**Mr. McDermid:** It is your motion. Stay in the House and listen.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** I have not heard anyone mention the presence or the absence of a Member. The Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister (Mr. Gustafson) has the floor.

**Mr. Gustafson:** The Minister of Agriculture immediately responded.

**Mr. Boudria:** Is he present in the House? Tell us.

**Mr. Gustafson:** We had a recommendation that went forward and brought \$48 million of relief to the cattle producer, the sheep producer and to the livestock producer across western Canada.

**Mr. McDermid:** He is leaving the House again.

**Mr. Gustafson:** I want to tell you, Mr. Speaker, with regard to the recommendations made and the actions fulfilled by the Government, that this Government takes no lessons from the past administration. It was the Leader of the Party to which the Hon. Member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell (Mr. Boudria) belongs who told the farmers across Canada, not just the farmers of western Canada, to sell their own grain. Our Prime Minister told Canadian farmers that we will sell their products to the world.

What happened just a few days ago, Mr. Speaker? The Prime Minister of Canada at the Tokyo Summit gave top

priority, number one priority, to the pressing needs of agriculture across the nation.

**Mr. Boudria:** It wasn't even on the agenda.

**Mr. Gustafson:** The Prime Minister called a meeting of First Ministers in Saskatchewan. He called a meeting of First Ministers in Halifax. What was top priority? It was agriculture, Mr. Speaker. We have seen a Government that has acted. I could read the list.

**Mr. Foster:** Table the report.

**Mr. Gustafson:** To the western producers approximately \$550 million was allocated in crop insurance; \$350 million attributable to drought; \$48 million in assistance to western livestock producers; and \$552 million was granted under the Western Grain Stabilization Act for the 1984-85 crop year.

**Mr. Della Noce:** Give us more.

**Mr. Gustafson:** You may say the former administration brought in that Bill. Let me tell you that this Government had not been elected for many weeks when it brought forward an amendment which allowed for an interim payment under the Western Grain Stabilization Act. Farmers are appreciative of the Government's direction.

I spoke recently to a meeting of farmers in Weyburn, Saskatchewan. It was made up of the Farmer's Union, the Farmer's Survival Association and of people facing problems. We recognize that there are problems. I am not telling you today, Mr. Speaker, that all is roses in the farm community. We know that. We have done a lot as a Government and there is much more to do and this Government will do it.

On this side of the House we have a broad representation of agriculture. I do not know the numbers. We could have 75 Members representing agricultural ridings. I want to say that the agricultural meetings both in this House and in committee, as was the case under the program for drought, are the best attended. Both the Minister of Agriculture and the Prime Minister have listened to recommendations. The farmers' interests are voiced here in this House, and the actions are here to prove it.

**Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton—Melville):** Mr. Speaker, I rise to interrupt this debate between two Montreal Members across the floor.

[Translation]

Excuse me, the hon. Member is not from Montreal, he is from New Brunswick, Mr. Speaker. But in any case—

[English]

I want to say that the most important point about the debate this afternoon is to call upon the Government to make public a report done by the Hon. Member for Assiniboia (Mr. Gustafson). That is the only question. The Member for Assiniboia has failed to answer the question why his report was not made public by his great and esteemed leader. The Member from