

Agricultural Stabilization Act

[Translation]

Mr. Ouellet: Mr. Speaker, I have a very brief question for the Hon. Member who just made a highly interesting contribution. I would like to advise him that the former Member for Lotbinière (Mr. Dubois), who was Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture under the Trudeau administration, has been calling us over the telephone in the lobby reminding us about the strength and determination with which he, as a Liberal Member from Quebec, used to defend the interests of the Quebec farmers when he was a Member here. He reminded me that the work he did with all the Members of the Quebec caucus sitting on the sub-committee on Agriculture bore fruit, because when the Government had intended to put forward a similar bill, Members from Quebec, at the request of representatives from the Quebec Union des producteurs agricoles, were able to make representations to the Government so that the Bill would not get approval in the previous Parliament. Our friend Jean-Guy Dubois was wondering over the telephone a few minutes ago why the present Member for Lotbinière (Mr. Tremblay) did not rise in this debate to defend the interests of farmers in his area, and I would like our colleague who just spoke, who knew our friend Jean-Guy Dubois well, to tell us how much he has been disappointed at the lack of responsibility of those Members for rural constituencies in Quebec and Eastern Canada who yesterday opposed the amendment put forward by the Hon. Member for Humboldt-Lake Centre (Mr. Althouse) who wanted to make sure that regional interests of farmers in rural areas would be safeguarded by Bill C-25.

[English]

Mr. Baker: Mr. Speaker, I do not know for the life of me why every single Member of Parliament has not spoken at some point or other on this particular legislation, not only in the House of Commons or in committee but to the Minister and the Prime Minister and every single Cabinet Minister in his caucus, no matter which one it was. I cannot understand how since last fall we have seen the Government of Canada bring in measures like this, that nobody agrees with, that affected those primary producers and those farmers and those fishermen and those lumbermen, in such a way as has never been done before.

● (2040)

[Translation]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Charest): Order, please! The Hon. Member for Bonaventure-Îles-de-la-Madeleine (Mr. Gray) on a point of order.

Mr. Gray (Bonaventure-Îles-de-la-Madeleine): Mr. Speaker, there is one thing that is being steadily ignored this evening.

[English]

With our new Government, we want to put some order—

[Translation]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Charest): Order! I am sorry but this is not a question, nor is it a point of order. It is a point of debate.

Mr. Lapierre: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Charest): I hope the Hon. Member for Shefford (Mr. Lapierre) rises on a point of order.

Mr. Lapierre: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to see the Hon. Member for Bonaventure-Îles-de-la-Madeleine (Mr. Gray) has come in. Since the beginning of the debate he has not uttered a dam word. It is time he say something!

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Charest): If there will be two, there will be three, as we say in French.

[English]

Mr. Gray (Bonaventure-Îles-de-la-Madeleine): Mr. Speaker, my point is very clear. The Hon. Member from the Opposition was saying that they could not resolve the problems with the Bills. We will with our Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Wise).

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Charest): Order, please. The Hon. Member knows full well that that is not a point of order.

Mr. Baker: Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member did get on the record saying that this is a new order. Yes, this is a new Government and a new order. It taxes the poor people. It taxes the farmers. This new order allows the United States to impose tariffs on the farmers and the people who are trying to sell products to the United States. This is the new order that is now picking a fight with the provincial Governments on practically every bit of legislation that it is introducing—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Charest): Order. I call the Hon. Member to order on a question of relevancy.

Mr. Baker: Getting back to the relevant question asked by the Hon. Member concerning the input of Members of Parliament, this is a very, very important subject. No matter on which side of the House one sits, there is a mechanism to effect legislation. Unfortunately, on this side of the House the only thing we can do is hold up legislation. When one is on the government side, one can apply the appropriate pressure and make the appropriate threats that need to be made on behalf of the primary producers of this country. One can make those threats to the Cabinet and one can be heard. Of course, no one outside the caucus room knows what is said inside, but I would predict that there has been a great deal of discussion and argument, not only on this issue but on other issues. If the original legislation as it was presented was not acceptable, then what would we do with the Minister's amendment to the original Bill? Then certainly it becomes doubly unacceptable to anyone, because that amendment is what caused the uproar