

they have not been around long enough. However, they ignore and destroy the Prairie Farm Assistance Act and put nothing in its place. They say, "We will carry it on for 1971 and phase it out in 1973 and governments can move in with crop insurance programs." There has to be a reason that the crop insurance program has never taken hold in the Palliser triangle, the great semi-arid wheat growing region of western Canada, but I wonder if this government knows it. The reason is that the premiums are too high in comparison with the risk, so the system is ignored in that area. The government could have used the PFAA and adjusted it to an effective crop insurance program for that area, but instead they wanted to lay their hands on every dollar they could to bolster this stabilization program so that it would not cost the government any more than it is costing them now. They wanted to grab the money in the Temporary Wheat Reserves Act and the amounts out of the crop insurance program and to recover some of the cost of subsidized interest programs in selling grain overseas. They wanted to lay their hands on all these things and put them into a total package which they could present to the people saying, "We have a program; we are doing something really big." In fact, they are only juggling figures and destroying, without thought of replacement, at least two programs that have served the farmers in many ways in the past, instead of updating these programs and making them function.

• (2:50 p.m.)

The decisions to be made will be important. They will control of the Wheat Board and there are no provisions for farmers to participate. There are charges in the quota system which the farmer will have to live with. These are significant changes and will require significant adjustments on the part of the farmer. We are left with the assumption that all these decisions are to be made in Winnipeg and Ottawa, that there will be no machinery set up enabling farmers to participate in these decisions in order that there may be some feed back and communication. If in five or six years from now there is unrest in the country over the total program, the reason for that in part will be that farmers will not have been participating in the decision making process.

When contemplating the last appointment which was made to the Wheat Board, the government ought to have appointed someone from one of the various farm organizations who would have been closer to farmers and had a background in farming. The government chose not to do so. Instead, it reached back into one of the Federal government departments and appointed a man from that level.

The decisions to be made will be important. They will affect farmers day by day, their income and how they live. I heard some useful comments in this area at a seminar in Saskatoon under the auspices of the University of Saskatchewan. It was made by one of the people who has worked on the program. At the seminar there was an assistant professor named Storey, an economist with a farming background. He made some comments

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which I do not suppose will affect the course the government is adopting, but in part he said:

I believe that income fluctuation is a problem but it is not the major problem. The Income Stabilization Plan is directed at reducing the problem of income fluctuations but it does little or nothing toward solving the problem of an adequate level of income, whether stable or unstable over time. There appears to be little or no additional money for the farmer in this program because the Temporary Wheat Reserves Act, and the Prairie Farm Assistance Act were given up so there would be government money for this program.

This statement was made at the seminar in Saskatoon by a professor at the University of Saskatchewan. That was an opinion expressed at that meeting by an intelligent observer. He was right. Although we hear on the news and are told by farming organizations that farm income has dropped by 50 per cent, the government persists in its parsimonious and ill advised course of action and ignores the plight of the farmers of western Canada. Of course, if the minister does not want to heed the remarks I have just quoted, perhaps he would care to listen to the provincial treasurer of Saskatchewan, Dave Stuart.

An hon. Member: A great Canadian.

Mr. Gleave: For you he may be a great Canadian, but for me he is slightly less of a disaster, so help me, than this government. Here, the important decisions are made and the provincial people make the secondary ones, then stand in their places and cheer the stabilization bill. Why? I will tell you why, Mr. Speaker. They cheer because \$100 million is coming in their direction. But what will that do for our farmers in the future? Hon. members can cheer that provincial government. I do not blame them. They are stuck with it but I am not, and that is the essential difference between us.

An hon. Member: Hon. Members over there can have that provincial government.

Mr. Gleave: According to a statement put out by that provincial treasurer, farmers in Saskatchewan owe, on the average, between \$1,070 and \$1,250 in respect of cash advances. They are in debt to that extent, and this government proposes to stabilize them in that condition. This bill is designed to make sure that they will remain in that condition. It is designed to get the government off the hook so that farmers and provincial ministers cannot come back and say, "But you should do this or that in terms of sales, assistance or storage. This bill is designed to get the government nicely off the hook. They will be able to say to farmers in western Canada, just as they have said to the big cities of Canada, "This is really not our concern; it is a provincial responsibility, and you people can struggle with it." That is the position into which the government is putting itself. They will distribute the \$100 million, but the program will not really be tied to grain other than through the permit book. In many cases, the money will not be distributed properly or fairly.

Over the week end a farmer in Saskatoon said to me, "How will this work out?" He said that he has two sons