

Proceedings on Adjournment Motion

of \$6 per acre and it will be rewarded at the rate of \$10 per acre for forage, using the amount of money for which farmers have applied. The other figure to which the hon. member referred was always hypothetical. It was based on the total possible participation by farmers.

• (10:10 p.m.)

Mr. Speaker, the word "hypothetical" is the one which grabs me because all across the country during the summer when the Lift program had its inception, the minister created the impression to the farmers and the general public that this program would pour some \$140 million into the western grain economy. This message immediately spread across the country. I have a number of press clippings here and shall refer to one in particular from the *Leader Post* of March 4, 1970. It states:

Ab Douglas, MP for Assiniboia, received mixed reaction Saturday when he spoke to more than 400 farmers here about the federal government's wheat acreage reduction program.

It continues:

Mr. Douglas said the program could inject up to \$140 million into the western economy—

I note the words "up to". I am not saying he said \$140 million, but he did indicate to the people of Canada that there would be a considerable amount in excess of \$100 million pumped into the economy. Up until last Friday night \$56,396,025 was paid out under the Lift program. That is a fairly up to date figure. It is estimated that the final amount will be something like \$57 million. Actually there is a possibility that with forage the cost will be another \$6 million. However, since it was stated there was forage seed for one one million acres last year, the figure will likely be at the most another \$4 million. It is not likely that more than \$61 million will be paid out. The Lift program will cost the federal government considerably less than the complete figure unless the cost of administration is much more than we think.

Mr. Speaker, my point is that farmers who were hailed out up to July 15 were paid under the Lift program, as well they should have been. Farmers who were hailed out two days later received nothing. I went to the minister with a list of 14 farmers in the Bashaw area whose crops had been wiped out by a vicious hail storm around July 19 or 20. Their crops were totally destroyed. I have a letter here from a Mr. Entrup, secretary of Unifarm in Alberta. I shall quote the letter in part:

—the executive secretary of Mr. Lang assured us that Mr. Lang had taken immediate action and had stated that he was standing behind his promise made at the meeting in Heisler.

I believe this was on July 17. The letter continues:

Even if letters were received from the appeal tribunal rejecting applications we were assured that cases out of the Viking storm area were going to be reviewed again and this time approved. As we understand an additional seven day's extension were granted after July 15, 1970.

I have a letter here from another source. There were cases of people who were insured and whose premises were inspected. The government covered the cost of inspection. Some, however, were later notified that they were late filers. There was evidence on the record that on

[Mr. Downey.]

September 14 one field, that of Mr. Ed Eisler whom I know, was inspected and on December 22 Mr. Eisler was notified that he was a late filer. Mr. Speaker, I am saying that this government can spend millions of dollars on bilingualism, on pornographic programming by the CBC and on an aircraft carrier which it then junks, but there is not enough flexibility or humanity in their souls to look after a handful of farmers who happen to be hailed out a few days after the deadline for the Lift program.

I suggest that if they paid each farmer in western Canada who made application, because he was hailed out, after this deadline the sum would be less than \$1 million. That, Mr. Speaker, constitutes my problem and the problem of many farmers.

Hon. H. A. Olson (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, there was nothing in the presentation made by the hon. member for Battle River (Mr. Downey) in addition to what he raised in the question the other day. The minister responsible for the Wheat Board gave him a reply then and the contents of that reply are just as valid now as when he gave it.

The hon. member ought to realize that when you set up a program like this you have to make provision for a deadline. It does not make very much difference when the deadline is set, because there will always be some difficulty about it. The hon. member of course failed to mention that because of some late applications regarding the physical condition of all of these fields up to July 15, the board of review, or appeal board, were given authority to make adjustments for those late applications. That means that those applications came in stating the conditions as of and up to July 15 and not after that.

Anyone who had seeded his crop and the condition of the field changed because of having plowed it down, because he swathed a cover crop, because of hail damage or whatever, had an opportunity to amend his application up to July 15; and even if the application did not come in until after July 15 that was taken into account. But with regard to anyone who had not changed his application prior to July 15, what was contained in his application was valid.

So far as the \$140 million is concerned, the hon. member answered that question for himself. That was the total offer if there had been 100 per cent participation by western farmers based on their wheat plantings in 1969. Of course, as the minister replied to the hon. member, the total amount that would be paid out would be in compliance with the offer that was made. If it were 50 per cent, and that is what it was—from 24 million acres down to about 12 million acres—then 50 per cent of the estimated cost would be paid out. Of course, that was not determined by the government; it was determined by the farmers. That was the amount for which they applied.

In addition to this, when we talk about the other money the Minister of Finance (Mr. Benson) has already announced, as has the minister responsible for the Wheat Board, some time later this year, and hopefully sooner