

Agricultural Stabilization Act

This bill is not a good bill. It has not been supported by policy. Yet it is put before us as being a panacea for agriculture. The government is in a hurry to put it through, but it can do nothing under this bill that it could not do under the enabling clauses of the Act as it stood. The bill adds nothing by way of policy or legislation. It is a flop. It is one of the greatest charades one has ever seen, yet it is presented as the cure for all economic evils. It is presented as an immediate must. It is a charade. It is not a good piece of legislation.

Mr. J. H. Horner (Crowfoot): Mr. Speaker, in rising to take part in the third reading debate on Bill C-50, I cannot help but commend the hon. member for Medicine Hat (Mr. Hargrave) on the speech he made about the cattle and wool industries. I share his regret that the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Whelan) and this House saw fit to bring forward the amendments on the report stage and deal with them at a time when the agriculture committee was travelling. I would not have minded had the amendments been put forward when I, who was the mover of a couple of the amendments, was absent from the House because of some neglect of the work of the House of Commons of which I may or may not have been guilty. But I deeply regret that the minister saw fit to bring forward the amendments when the agriculture committee was travelling. I felt that the best way I could serve my constituents and agriculture was to travel with that committee, and I say that the minister's actions show a disregard for the work of the House of Commons. It is only common courtesy for the House to afford members time to present their views according to the rules and regulations of the House. According to the rules, I had dutifully filed amendments to Bill C-50. I was unable to participate in the debate on the amendments as fully as I would have liked because, as I say, I felt my duty was to travel with the agriculture committee to western Canada to hold hearings on Bill C-41.

What did the amendments deal with, Madam Speaker? The subject matter was dealt with by the hon. member for Medicine Hat, but basically I felt that wool should have been included—

Mr. Whelan: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. When we dealt with the motions put forward by the hon. member, it was not at a time when the agriculture committee was travelling. The hon. member was absent at the time. I do not know where he was, but other members were here when the amendments were dealt with at the report stage. I did not submit Bill C-50 to the House. The House leaders agreed to do so at the time, though I had some serious doubts. We dealt with report stage but not third reading. I suggest the hon. member knows full well that when the House dealt with his motions the agriculture committee was not travelling at that time.

Mr. McCain: On the point of order, Madam Speaker, before the committee went on its trip to the west I was assured that Bill C-50 would not be presented to the House, and I felt I had that assurance from members of the committee on both sides of the House. This was a breach of etiquette which is inexcusable, Madam Speaker.

[Mr. McCain.]

Mr. Whelan: Madam Speaker, I explained the position on Bill C-50. It would be normal procedure for the House leaders to discuss it, not for the Minister of Agriculture to submit the bill, and the hon. member knows right well that is so.

Mr. Horner: I did not intend to stir up a great deal of controversy, Madam Speaker, but having done so so easily I guess the minister must have a bit of a guilt complex.

Mr. Whelan: Just put the facts on the record, that is all.

Mr. Horner: The minister talks about putting the facts on the record, Madam Speaker, and I will put the facts on the record. I spoke on those amendments before the agriculture committee travelled, but they were dealt with in all final stages while the agriculture committee was travelling. I am certain the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Whelan) has some sway within the cabinet. He could have spoken to the government House leader and said that since we are nearly through dealing with these amendments, he would prefer not to have this House debate agricultural matters while the committee on agriculture was travelling. I know his power has been diminishing ever since this government obtained a majority in the House of Commons. When they were in a minority position and needed the minister, they paid attention to him. In any event, I know he still has some authority and he could have spoken to the government House leader. With regard to this business of the House leaders having agreed—

● (1200)

Mr. Whelan: That is right.

Mr. Horner:—the House leader of the NDP and the House leader of the Conservative Party cannot in any way direct the business of the House of Commons. It is the government House leader who directs the business of the House, and the Minister of Agriculture could have spoken to him about this matter.

Mr. Whelan: I rise on a point of order, Madam Speaker. The hon. member knows full well, if he checks the proceedings of the agriculture committee, that the representative of the official opposition agreed to the amendments, etc. Some members of that party did not go along with the agreement worked out in respect of the proceedings of the committee by the hon. member for Qu'Appelle-Moose Mountain (Mr. Hamilton). In any event, they went on their merry way, which was completely contrary to what the hon. member for Qu'Appelle-Moose Mountain had agreed to at the committee, yet they talk about agreements and word of honour.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Horner: Madam Speaker, I have the committee proceedings before me—

Mr. Elzinga: Madam Speaker, I rise on the same point of order. I should like to point out to you and the House the type of agreement that is reached with this government. We saw earlier here the type of agreement that is reached when the House leader of the government party rose and said it was agreed among the House leaders that we would