

Committee Reports

attention a point which I do not think has been considered. The citation to which Your Honour has been good enough to refer us states:

When the motion to concur is moved, the House may refer the report back to the committee for further consideration or with instructions to amend it in any respect.

I respectfully submit, Your Honour, that the motion before us does neither.

Mr. Hnatyshyn: It does both.

Mr. Gray (Windsor West): It does neither. It does not ask—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I take it the Hon. Member is now making an addendum to his earlier argument. I have read Citation 660 in total. I am perfectly satisfied that the amendment is entirely in order. I can find no other interpretation of Citation 660 other than to allow the House to send the matter back in any way or in any form for any consideration that the House intends.

Are there questions or comments with regard to the speech of the Hon. Member for Laval-des-Rapides (Mr. Garneau)? The Hon. Member for Algoma (Mr. Foster).

Mr. Foster: Mr. Speaker, I was interested in the comments of the Hon. Member for Laval-des-Rapides (Mr. Garneau) especially as they related to the situation in the constituency of the Hon. Member for Lethbridge-Foothills (Mr. Thacker). Although the Hon. Member for Lethbridge-Foothills said that things are much more optimistic today in farming than they were a year ago, the last time I had an opportunity to visit Lethbridge it was the first time in 60 years that it was not possible to plant a sugar-beet crop there. The whole sugar-beet industry in Canada is very much in doubt. It involves hundreds of jobs and thousands of acres of land. The central point is whether or not the Government will be bringing in a long-term sugar-beet policy and whether or not it will be making a stabilization payment for 1983. This has been in doubt for at least six months now. I know that the Hon. Member has been making great representations. We have been making great representations, as have other Members. Yet, the government fails to move. I am interested to know what the Hon. Member feels about this situation since I know he has had a chance to visit plants there to meet with the growers and talk about the entire situation.

● (1450)

The same problem which exists about the agricultural stabilization payment for 1983 for sugar beets in southern Alberta applies in British Columbia with the B.C. fruit growers. For the first time in history, the claim of the B.C. fruit growers for their agricultural stabilization payment has been adjudicated at 80 per cent rather than 90 per cent, which is doing the fruit industry in British Columbia out of \$12 million this year. It seems most unfair that we have a Tory Government which comes in and just refuses to make those agricultural stabilization payments, which I believe is exacerbating the situation.

The farm debt crisis is putting young farmers out of business, and I would just like to know the thoughts of the Hon. Member for Laval-des-Rapides (Mr. Garneau) because I know he is very interested in this matter.

Mr. Garneau: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I am very much interested in the sugar-beet industry. For years, when I was sitting in another Parliament, my responsibilities kept me in touch with the sugar-beet industry. As you know, for years, in the Province of Quebec we had a plan. It was established in 1944. A certain number of farmers have been involved in this plan. Many families earned their living through the sugar-beet industry. Now they have the same kind of problem in Quebec that is being experienced in Lethbridge.

The Hon. Member for Algoma (Mr. Foster) will certainly recall, because he has studied the matter, that a couple of questions have been raised by the producers. First, they are angry at the Government because it did not pay the subsidies which were supposed to be paid to the producer, and those subsidies were for the 1983 production—not the 1984 production. Normally, this should have been paid in the fall of 1984 or early in 1985, but we are at the end of 1985 and those stabilization payments have not been made, and they should have been made according to a plan which was in force for years.

I do not know why the Government, which had that kind of contract with the producers, made the decision on its own not to pay in accordance with a plan which exists. The producers in Lethbridge are very angry at the Government because the money which is owed to them is being taken away. Second, the producers want an answer for the future. What will happen in the future? Will they be in a position to produce? Are we going to have a sugar industry in this country? This is the question which is on their minds, and it is the same question which the producers in Montreal are asking. The answer is in the hands of the Government. It is talking about a long-term plan or policy for the sugar-beet industry. But the industry may have to wait and wait and wait.

You know very well, Mr. Speaker, how important it is for your own riding that an answer be given to those producers. This is why I cannot understand the Hon. Member for Lethbridge-Foothills (Mr. Thacker) being so arrogant in his remarks. He is in a position to defend those producers. He should defend his riding instead of fighting against the former Government which was defeated on September 4. If the Liberal Government committed sins, it has paid the price. Now the responsibility is in the hands of the Tory Government. The Hon. Member for Lethbridge-Foothills belongs to the Tory Party so he should bear a part of that responsibility. He should be just as responsible as this Party is because the problem has not been settled.

Those producers now have another problem. Some of the sugar beet producers want to sell their farms. They do not know if they will be able to benefit from the capital gains tax exemption.