

Government Orders

I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, the American model will not work for Canada. It may work for the Americans. If it works for them, leave it for them, but it will not work here. It is not going to work to destroy subsidies in this country. It is not going to work to destroy VIA Rail. It is not going to work to privatize the post office. You can go on and on. The government is on the wrong track and some day soon even it will understand it. I am hoping that it will not be too late because if it continues much longer, there will be nothing left of this country.

Mr. Ferguson: Mr. Speaker, I would like to commend my colleague on an excellent address in the House of Commons. I am sorry there were not more Tory Members of Parliament from the west to hear this.

I have a press clipping saying that the Keystone Producers of the province of Manitoba wrote to the Prime Minister on September 15 demanding that this government keep this program in place so that the farmers are able to obtain their interest free cash advances on grains in storage. I also have a letter from the Manitoba Corn Producers Association asking the same thing. They say that the program has always been an excellent method of increasing the orderly marketing of corn in Manitoba and prevents any dumping of corn in the fall thereby having shortages of this commodity in the spring. It is only in recent years that corn has been developed as a cash crop and a crop alternative for Manitoba. I would like to ask my colleague what in his opinion the impact of the withdrawal of these interest free loans will be to the producers in Manitoba.

• (1550)

Mr. Harvard: Mr. Speaker, the impact is going to be a very negative one. The Conservatives across the way do not have to take my word for it. In fact, they do not even have to take the word of any of us on this side of the House. All they have to do is listen to farmers and farm organizations.

It was pointed out very forcefully in this House just yesterday that 19 producer organizations met in Winnipeg and decided to make a plea to the Prime Minister to put a stop to this, to continue the advance payments interest free. When my hon. friend from Lambton—Middlesex asks what kind of impact it is going to have, I

cannot think of better testimony and a better answer than the one that comes from the producer organizations. They are in the front lines. They are at ground level. They know exactly what is going to happen. They know the impact and they say the impact is going to be horrific. It is going to be terrible. It is not in the interests of the farm community. In fact, one of the ministers is sitting over there right now, and I think all he has to do is consult some of his friends in the provincial government of Manitoba. The agriculture minister there has said it is not in the interests of the farm community. It is not in the interests of Canada to discontinue this program. If they would only listen, they would know that the impact of this bill is going to be very, very negative.

Mr. Jim Karpoff (Surrey North): Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak on this bill. I guess I am like many people in Canada and probably in the House of Commons. If you scratch me very hard, you will find a farmer, and if not, at least a farmer's son, and I guess I fall into that category.

My grandfather farmed in the Eastern Townships in Quebec, moved to Alberta and farmed a very prosperous farm in central Alberta near Camrose. The farm was then run by my uncle and now it is run by my cousin. The next generation has already purchased the farm next to him so that the Nodan farm in Duhamel is growing.

I think that is typical of Canadians. Nearly all of us come from farm families and therefore we continue to have an interest in the viability of agriculture, not only because it is one of our major economic bases but because we have friends, relatives and families who are dependent on the viability of agriculture.

I am a little bit bewildered by this bill because what I have learned about the introduction of legislation and programs by the Conservatives since I have been here is that they take a problem and they make it worse. Certainly in the areas I am most familiar with, social services and affordable housing, they do everything they can to take a problem and see if they can make it into a total and utter mess, with high interest rates and cut-backs in services. Here is one area where there appeared to be no problem, so I thought at least they would leave it alone. They have followed their rule that if there is a problem they intervene and make it worse, and now they are starting to say that if there is no problem, they still intervene and create a problem.