

Government Orders

We had proposed as well that the government should not be allowing NISA, which is a funded program where the government matches dollar for dollar certain amounts of funding, to be made available to other than Canadian citizens or permanent residents of Canada. The government did not accept those amendments.

We look at the bill believing that it is a framework legislation that can provide for agreements. We are not certain how effective the legislation will be and whether the objectives will be met. On the other hand, we believe that the government has an immediate responsibility to provide cash assistance before the crop season begins this spring. Because of its urgency, we hope that the government will act and bring this legislation back to the House from time to time to be amended, as needed, or at least to have the agreements amended so that we will be able to make the necessary adjustments. With the wide variety of growing situations and market circumstances and other aspects involved in this, and at a time of incredible cash flow shortage, there is not much confidence or belief that this legislation will stand as it is for very long without amendments to those agreements.

We want to see the legislation pass so that the benefits can be made available to producers. We think it will require adjustments and changes not very far down the road, but we are pleased to see it pass at third reading today and get on the road to providing assistance either later this fall or certainly in the next crop year to remedy in that crop year what has been lost in this particular crop year. During the past two years the government has chopped back in a crude and violent way government support programs by some \$1.6 billion. That is why there is an emergency today for Canadian grain and oilseed producers.

This legislation is not going to correct that immediate problem. We require assistance immediately, before the planting season this spring. If this legislation works the way the government believes it will, hopefully it will be useful in the next crop year 1991-92.

Mr. Stan J. Hovdebo (Saskatoon—Humboldt): Mr. Speaker, yesterday I attended a press conference where I and a number of my colleagues from this House who had made a recent trip to Sudan and Ethiopia were putting

before our country the needs of those particular countries for food. It is recognized that if we do not get a couple of million tonnes of food to those countries in the next few months, as many as a million people will die.

There are 12 million people in those two countries that are being affected by famine, a famine that is considered to be even worse than the one in 1984-85 in which one million people died. This is thought to be a worse situation because of unco-operative governments and the wars that are going on in those areas. We in the prairies and in Canada grow over 50 million tonnes of grain, of which we export up to 30 million tonnes. Our contribution to world food is fairly small compared to the amount that we actually grow.

What we are talking about today is a system which will allow the farmers in Canada to survive. It is almost ridiculous that we find ourselves working on a plan that is supposed to help in the survival of the food producers in our country when there is such a great need in the world for the food that we produce.

• (1640)

Obviously there is something wrong with our distribution system. Some people starve while we cannot get enough for our product to survive. The various papers that were part of the growing together operation that the government put into place made a plea for a structure that would stabilize the food production industry in Canada.

The two plans that are part of this particular bill, the Farm Income Protection Act, are the Gross Revenue Insurance Program and the Net Income Stabilization Account. They are the product of a considerable amount of discussion among people interested in farming and among farmers themselves. At least that was what was supposed to happen. However, the consultation process only went so far. It continued up until the basics had been agreed upon, then the details were left to the bureaucrats and the legislation was left to the bureaucrats.