

*Prairie Grain Advance Payments Act*

**Mr. Gottselig:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the Hon. Member for Swift Current—Maple Creek (Mr. Wilson) for his kind words. The key to this deficiency payment announcement was the method by which it was announced. It was first announced in the Throne Speech which indicated that we would spare no effort to assist those agricultural producers. It was later mentioned in the House by the Prime Minister. The Minister of Agriculture indicated that he would initiate discussions with the provincial Governments at the Deputy Minister level. Probably more important than that was the fact that we would involve the agricultural producer groups.

All too often in the past, we have seen programs announced from this great ivory tower without any concern for the people who are affected by them. The agricultural producer groups which have a grassroots level input can now enter into these discussions. This will provide a direct link with the producers and will allow us to institute the delivery of this program in a way that will be decided by the producers. I believe the key is that the producers themselves will put forward their ideas as to how this program should be delivered.

**Mr. Gauthier:** Mr. Speaker, given the fact that we have heard 10 speakers on second reading stage of this Bill and the fact that we all know that farmers are expecting passage of this Bill, would the Hon. Member not agree that we should interrupt the debate now and put the question?

**Mr. Gottselig:** Mr. Speaker, as my colleague, the Hon. Member for Swift Current—Maple Creek mentioned, I feel that I am here to represent my constituents. They want to hear our position on this issue. I do not feel that expressing my opinion on behalf of my constituents is holding up the business of the House.

**Mr. Gauthier:** Mr. Speaker, I was not questioning the Hon. Member's right to speak in the House. I am simply saying that the principle of the Bill is to be discussed at second reading stage. We all know that in principle, this Bill is a good one and should be passed quickly. Why are government Members filibustering the Bill?

**Mr. Gottselig:** Mr. Speaker, I do not believe that expressing my opinion on behalf of my constituents is filibustering the Bill. Perhaps the Hon. Member chooses to see it that way. His Party is well known for filibustering a great many things. I do not believe that we are filibustering this Bill.

**Mr. Riis:** Mr. Speaker, Parties decide to filibuster when they are in fact attempting to stop a Bill. If the Hon. Member is interested in representing his constituents, he would be well advised to take steps right now that would enable payments to get into the hands of farmers as quickly as possible rather than prolonging debate hour after hour.

It is not that the debate is not interesting. It is an interesting and useful debate. We are hearing various concerns from various parts of the country and that is fine. However, we are anxious to help the farmers and to put money into their hands.

Hon. Members say that they want to represent their constituents. Believe me, their constituents would appreciate being represented by Hon. Members who took action to see that the money got into their hands as quickly as possible.

**Mr. Mayer:** Mr. Speaker, just to set the record straight, the House Leader of the NDP knows that farmers presently receive money under the Prairie Grain Advance Payments Act. This Bill has nothing to do with either limiting or increasing the amount of money available.

Last June, we very much appreciated the position taken by the New Democratic Party. Members of the NDP were in favour of passing this Bill at that time and if we could have done it then, all of the proposed amendments would have been in effect at the beginning of the new crop year beginning August 1. Unfortunately, it was the Official Opposition that held it up.

This Bill has been before the House this morning for an hour and a half and it was before the House for about an hour and a half a week ago. In total, it has been before the House for three hours. It is a piece of legislation that affects the agricultural community. A great many Members of the House directly represent farmers. This provides them a very good opportunity to rise in the House to speak on agricultural matters. Three hours is not a long time to talk about a Bill that will affect agriculture.

We appreciate the position taken by members of the New Democratic Party. If their point of view had carried the day, this Bill would have passed last June. We do not feel that three hours of discussion on an important piece of legislation will in any way hold it up.

**Mr. Riis:** Mr. Speaker, so that the record is perfectly clear, the Minister responsible for the Wheat Board indicated that members of his Party were concerned about agriculture and about their constituents and therefore wished to make some comments on this Bill. I want to make it perfectly clear that there are many of us as New Democrats who also represent farm communities. As we originally decided, it would be in the best interests of the farm community to treat this Bill expeditiously. As a matter of fact, I recall requests to do just that. In our efforts to be co-operative, helpful, and assist in the movement and passage of this Bill as quickly as possible, many of our representatives of farm communities have decided to raise their comments at the appropriate place, not at the debate in principle.

● (1240)

I have been listening to the debates carefully this morning. Quite frankly, we have gone far beyond the debate in principle. The members of the New Democratic Party say that we should get the Bill into committee where we can deal with the specifics. We will then have another opportunity at third reading, and so be it. Again, I urge the Government to be expeditious and get on with the passage of this Bill, as it requested us to do originally.