

at some point we will get some realistic discussion of how to deal with that and the impact of that from all the parties in this House.

I am floored by some of the comments that I have heard. I would urge the government to consider something that we asked for in the previous Parliament. Our caucus had asked that the government publish regularly the regional and provincial distributions of its tax expenditure and transfer policies so that those things are on paper and clear, so that we can see the impact of changes on provinces and so that we can have this kind of discussion in a rational atmosphere rather than it becoming simply a matter of scoring points in a particular province.

We have done considerable work in this area to get a greater understanding of these kinds of considerations. Let us be clear about it once again. To assist in the running of the government in the province of Quebec \$3.7 billion is being voted here. It is a principle we share, an equalization payment, because there is a lower fiscal capacity in that province. Let us be clear that this is what this bill does. I am also looking for some realistic discussion of this in the next couple of years. Let us be clear that the option the Bloc Québécois is proposing to deal with this, the sovereignty of Quebec, would result in the province of Quebec receiving zero.

I am really looking forward to the day we begin to discuss both sides of the argument and, in a much more realistic fashion, these kinds of considerations.

• (1150)

In concluding my remarks I would urge the House to reconsider Bill C-3 and to reconsider at this point committing to a growth in our financial commitments that will amount to \$2 billion over the next five years before we have even had presented a financial framework.

I am under no particular illusion that our colleagues on either side of the House are going to support such reduction proposals. I do not think the time has come yet when all parties are willing to bite the bullet. I would at least suggest that the Liberals give this some consideration as in the upcoming months and year they have to grapple more seriously with the financial mess of the country.

We will be discussing the bill in committee and at third reading. In the meantime there will be a budget. We also will be examining our position on this matter in light of the budget, in light of the data we get out of that, and in light of proposals we have and we are expecting in areas of other fiscal transfers.

Once again, we will examine this in light of our deteriorating financial situation. In the meantime I believe my colleagues will be opposing this extended financial commitment.

Government Orders

Mr. Benoît Tremblay (Rosemont): Mr. Speaker, I have a question concerning the speech made by the member for Calgary West. What would be the fiscal capability of the western provinces if the federal government did not pay \$2 million to \$3 million for the wheat?

Mr. Harper (Calgary West): Mr. Speaker, I am not sure precisely what the question is driving at. I think the member is asking me what would be the effect on the western provinces if there were not bridge payments in the event of the kind of agricultural crises that have occurred in the prairies.

In the context of the current equalization program Saskatchewan and Manitoba are recipients of this particular program. Other provinces and individuals are also recipients of other transfer payments.

The member alluded to one in particular. There are contributions that all governments and individuals make to certain agricultural stabilization programs. There are also periodically payments under those, an emergency payment under those. Obviously if those things did not come to pass in a timely fashion the impact would be negative. Nobody doubts that and nobody is debating the principle of there being fiscal sharing when that is appropriate.

I have suggested today to the government, and I will reassert that particular suggestion, that we begin to publish in an objective manner the comprehensive effects of these things on all provinces, not just individual programs. We can all point to programs in which we are short changed or there is a special consideration. Let us officially, through the Department of Finance, begin to regularly have this kind of analysis so that we can discuss these issues in a rational manner.

In short response to the member's question, there is absolutely no doubt that the impact of not receiving some of these programs would impact western provinces as well.

[Translation]

Mr. Yvan Loubier (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot): Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to the statement by my colleague from the Reform Party. I particularly noticed a remark which I found rather biased and uncomplimentary, I would say, towards Quebec, namely that Quebec received 45 per cent of equalization and suggesting that Quebec was the spoiled child of Canadian Confederation. If he did not understand, probably there are problems with the simultaneous translation. Maybe he did not get my message just now, which was that equalization is meant to raise the revenue of provinces and that Quebec is a have not province. If Quebec is less well off, they should ask by looking at it objectively, since they seem to be objective once in a while when their ridings or home provinces are concerned what