

notwithstanding that Canadian producers have stopped using them.

Mr. Gustafson: In answering the question, Mr. Speaker, let me say that it is important that the Department have the flexibility to deal with whatever situation should arise. As I suggested earlier, the regulations must be such that they are capable of dealing with any infraction that should present itself. However, certainly it is not the intent of this legislation to restrict in any way varieties that would be in the best interests of farming practices, whether that be in practice itself or for further research.

● (1150)

Mr. George Baker (Gander-Twillingate): Mr. Speaker, I would like to say just a few words concerning the Bill which is before us. As Hon. Members have pointed out, the Bill concerns a better control of the quality and market representation of seed, the control of the advertising of seed, the imposition of fines for violations and the extension of time limits for investigative practices.

As I was listening to Hon. Members debate the Bill I was thinking that what many farmers in a great many areas of western Canada have on their minds is that, yes, it is fine to be debating a bill such as this which provides better regulations concerning seed, but a seed for what? In other words it should not be forgotten, and it should be of paramount importance to this parliamentary body, to the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Wise), to Cabinet and all Members of Parliament, that certain segments of the farming community are going through an incredibly bad time simply because of a natural disaster. I suppose that disaster has really hit primary producers from British Columbia to Newfoundland as far as the fishing industry and farming communities are concerned.

I think it is useful for all Members to keep in mind that for once—and this is the worst possible situation we have seen for many years—farmers in certain areas of the country have been left in an absolutely desperate situation which has to be addressed as an emergency. It is fine for us to talk about legislation which corrects some matters which have occurred in the long term, but there is a short-term immediate problem facing a great number of farmers in the country to the point where some are wondering just how they can last from day to day. I speak of certain areas of Saskatchewan, as was outlined by the Hon. Member who spoke a few moments ago. There, for the first time in their lives, farmers have been forced to go to the welfare office.

It is useful to keep that in mind and to continue to remind the Government, the House and the Canadian people that there is a crisis today which faces the farming community—a crisis which has to be addressed as an emergency by the Government. As far as I can see, it is not being addressed. It is not being addressed on the urgent basis on which we have addressed problems in the past with respect to primary producers in other areas of the country.

Customs Act

It is sometimes gratifying to listen to the Government because it does and has responded to the primary producers on the East Coast where, because of weather conditions and so on, the fishery was bad. There was an immediate monetary response by the Government, in co-operation with the provincial Government.

When we talk about rectifying problems which have to do with the marketing of seed I wish to place on the record that there is an overriding and immediate problem of farmers having to go to the welfare office. There are problems within our system and our social security safety net as it applies to primary producers who are self-employed. I wanted to place those words on the record in the closing moments of a debate which deals with an important subject, as Hon. Members have said. However, there are certainly other subjects which are far more important and more urgent in terms of certain farmers in the country which need to be addressed.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Question.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Motion agreed to and Bill read the third time and passed.

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CUSTOMS ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

Hon. Elmer M. MacKay (Minister of National Revenue) moved that Bill C-59, an Act respecting Customs, as reported (with amendments) from a legislative committee, be concurred in.

Motion agreed to.

Hon. Elmer M. MacKay (Minister of National Revenue) moved that the Bill be read the third time and passed.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I welcome this opportunity to speak briefly on Bill C-59, a Bill dealing with the Customs Act, which is before us today for third and final reading. One might say that it is a piece of legislation whose time has come. As the House knows, this is an important piece of legislation, one which will replace an outdated and, in many ways, archaic statute and one which will facilitate a more streamlined and responsive approach to the management of customs matters in the country. Passage of Bill C-59 will help the Government fulfil a number of commitments it made to the House and to the country.

One of these commitments is to reduce and eliminate unnecessary costs and an unnecessary paper burden for those Canadians and Canadian firms with whom the Government does business. Another is to improve the over-all efficiency and productivity of government operations themselves. The new