

Prairie Grain Stabilization Act

relates to neckties, pots and pans, automobiles or agricultural products.

That does not mean that this act will remain as it is for the rest of time, but it is a fair and proper start to stabilization and this we need in the agricultural industry more than ever before. The days of producing anything you want on the farm and saying the city folk will have to buy it and eat it, are gone. Specialist farming has taken over and such things as synthetic foods have taken over. It is time we realized that if we are going to maintain our agricultural industry, and especially the grain industry, we must give consideration to stabilization.

Normal stability as it relates to production, distribution and consumption can apparently only be achieved when a reasonable balance is arrived at. Certain segments of the agricultural industry in Canada have made considerable progress in bringing stability through planned production and orderly marketing. This progress has been achieved by producers who have been prepared to accept the recognized principles of business requirements. It is true that considerable planning remains to be carried out before lasting stability can be achieved, but success breeds success and gradual stability growth will continue to be in evidence within these sectors of the industry.

I do not suggest that government can or should avoid all responsibility in connection with farm income. In fact, history shows that over the years many millions of dollars have been spent by all levels of government to assist farmers. I agree that the assistance was weighted heavily toward production practices. Experimental farms, extension department services and fieldmen, university departments, financial legislation, have all combined to help farmers improve efficiency and lower production costs.

The result has been a continuous lowering of food costs through decreased production, with precious little of the savings being retained by agricultural producers. The consumers jump with joy when the bottom falls out of egg or pork prices, while at the same time they are voting to go on strike to increase their own revenue. So we have real problems in trying to stabilize in various areas of the country, and we must get the farmers themselves involved.

These so-called mandarins who start organizations and go tearing around the country sending out form letters and propagandizing are serving no useful purpose for Canadian farmers. Let the farmers get together, because they will tell you what is good for the farming industry. They know. Of course, it is more fun politically to give the government a bad time and say the farmers are not getting enough and that they need more and more.

• (9:10 p.m.)

Mr. Speaker, you need a great deal of courage to bring legislation before this House, especially if you sincerely want to help the farmers of western Canada. I use the word "sincerely" because I think the government is being sincere. The legislation the government brings in is not perfect. We have accepted amendments in the agricultural committee from various sections of the opposition. I even remember accepting an amendment one day that was in French, which I could not read. We accept amendments.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

[Mr. Pringle.]

Mr. Pringle: We must consider the farmer's needs and not pay attention merely to political expediency.

Mr. Horner: Mr. Speaker, will the hon. member permit a question and tell us just what amendment was accepted relating to the Lift program? I submit that the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Olson) accepted no amendment relating to the Lift program or to this program.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel): Order, please. The hon. member for Fraser Valley East (Mr. Pringle) has the floor. Unless the hon. member for Crowfoot (Mr. Horner) has the permission of the hon. member, he cannot ask a question.

Mr. Pringle: Mr. Speaker, amendments were accepted. The hon. member, as usual, has caught me without having the amendment in front of me. I am sure that amendments suggested by his party were accepted. In any event, I will be glad to tell him about them at a later date.

An hon. Member: They were not amendments to this bill.

Mr. Pringle: Mr. Speaker, may I continue? Of course, I cannot support this amendment. If it were workable I would be most happy to support it. This is the first time that farmers have been able to participate in their own financial future. They do a great job of growing grain. They shoulder the risk of climatic conditions and take a real risk in finding markets. The Canadian people, as taxpayers, do their bit to help wherever that is possible. I do not think we have done enough. I think we must try to persuade the people to help the farmers more.

Within the framework of this Bill the taxpayers of Canada are to put up \$2 of the taxpayers' money for every dollar that is provided by producers, and this will be under a program to stabilize agricultural production. If hon. members were to research the background of this bill and study debates relating to it—I bring this to the attention of the hon. member for Crowfoot—they would find that certain suggestions made by the hon. member's party were agreed to and acted upon. If this bill had been in effect since 1950 the taxpayers of Canada would have poured \$432 million into the pockets of the grain farmers of western Canada over and above farmers' contributions. That term encompasses not only wheat farmers but grain farmers producing six different grains.

We must consider another matter relating to this bill. Wheat is no longer the main grain of western Canada. Hon. members have heard arguments advanced about this question. I think the right hon. member for Prince Albert (Mr. Diefenbaker) once talked about "the land of rape and honey". Rapeseed is a very important crop and was very important, as hon. members know, this summer. Flax is coming in, and just look at the big increase in our barley crop and the extra markets.

An hon. Member: And the price.

Mr. Pringle: I submit that this bill is designed to stabilize the income not only of wheat farmers but of all grain farmers.

Mr. Stanfield: This is a filibuster.