

made the point that these hazards, namely, drought, flood, wind, wild life and so on, were covered by crop insurance. The minister in charge of the Wheat Board said, and he has repeated it in recent months, that a grain income stabilization program would be related to markets and price.

If one accepts the position of the minister in charge of the Canadian Wheat Board, the grain stabilization fund has nothing to do with natural hazards brought on by weather, wild life and so on. Its only involvement ought to be with market and price. If that is so, how in heaven's name can he justify taking the money left in the prairie farm assistance fund and putting it in the grain stabilization fund? PFAA moneys are for programs covered now by crop insurance. It provides money for drought bonuses and so on. You hear people talk about drought bonuses, wet bonuses, for grain under the snow bonuses, and what-not. Clearly that money has nothing to do with markets and price. It has to do with natural risks, natural hazards thrown in our way by mother nature.

It has been suggested by some that the \$7 million or \$8 million still left in the PFAA account should be put in the crop insurance program fund and used for crop insurance in the designated areas, namely, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and that portion of British Columbia which comes under the jurisdiction of the Canadian Wheat Board. That money should be used for crop insurance in that area, and should be divided in direct proportion to the amounts collected in those areas over the years.

The Department of Agriculture says that this is not being done because it would be terribly difficult to figure out ways for dividing that money. I think that is not so. The department knows how many farmers delivered grain and from how many they deducted 1 per cent or 2 per cent. The money should be divided in the same proportion.

I have talked to people working in the crop insurance field and they say that \$7 million or \$8 million would not do much to reduce premiums in the three prairie provinces and the Peace River country of B.C. because the total amount of money involved is massive. But I submit that you can do other very useful things with that \$7 million or \$8 million. For example, you could use it for research connected with crop insurance, and for an enlarged program of education and information for farmers of the area who do not have crop insurance and are still examining it. Spending that money on research, information and education would be a good idea. It should be spent in the area from which it was collected. Any attempt to transfer that money to the Consolidated Revenue Fund and then to the grain stabilization fund would be totally unjustified, even if one uses the arguments of the minister in charge of the Wheat Board and of the former minister of agriculture. They said, "Oh, no, you cannot have pay-outs under a grain stabilization plan for hazards which should be covered by crop insurance." I argue, conversely, that you cannot take money collected for crop insurance and pay it into a grain stabilization plan.

In other words I submit that the Minister of Agriculture should not let the minister in charge of the Wheat Board have it both ways; he should not let him put his cotton picking hands on money which only the Minister of Agriculture ought to administer. I think he would get the

#### *Prairie Farm Assistance Act*

unanimous support of all members on this side for that proposition. I hope the minister will look again at the wording of the bill.

People in the crop insurance field have said that we should look more closely at damage done by wildlife in the three prairie provinces and the Peace River country of British Columbia. The provisions of the bill in this regard ought to be substantially expanded. Wildlife damage perhaps is not as significant as flood, wind or drought damage in the area of concern to the Wheat Board, but wildlife, all the same, does a considerable amount of damage to crops. The north end of Last Mountain Lake, which is in my constituency, is the centre of the Sandhill crane migration. What a flock of those do to a field of grain swaths in an afternoon is enough to drive any farmer to drink. It occurs annually.

● (1650)

I have lived in a number of places in Saskatchewan and Alberta. In the southwest dry area, the northwestern and southeastern areas there is a lot of bush, and big game crop damage occurs. It would be money well spent if they had \$7 million or \$8 million for that. This could be combined into the whole area of research, and more could be done by way of lure crops. Certain acreages should be set aside to entice wildlife away from farmers' crops.

The money belongs to the farmers in the Canadian Wheat Board area. They contributed it to a form of crop insurance, PFAA. When that act is repealed the money left over should go to the crop insurance plan. The minister may have some different idea that would be even better with regard to how that money might be used for crop insurance. However, I submit that that is the proper way to do it.

The hon. member for Qu'Appelle-Moose Mountain made one specific and some general statements regarding the administration of expense accounts and so forth. I have had the same sort of thing relayed to me. No doubt it has been relayed to the minister in one form or another. We would like a full and frank account from the minister on what he has been doing, what is now going on, and the results of any investigations or inquiries. I appreciate that if there is anything liable for court action it cannot be gone into at this point. However, he can certainly answer some of my questions. Have any charges been laid and convictions obtained? Will more charges be laid? Is there really anything to this at all?

I know the minister is anxious to deal fully and frankly with the members of this House and the Standing Committee on Agriculture. I am sure he will ask his House leader for the fullest possible terms of reference for the Standing Committee on Agriculture so witnesses can be called and all former and present employees, whether permanent or casual, will be notified in order that they may appear if they wish. I also ask that he give a full account of the efforts he said were being made in his January 31 letter to me in order to obtain employment for these permanent employees, some of whom have been with the PFAA administration for many years. Surely that is owed to those people who have given loyal and dedicated service.