

Prairie Grain Stabilization Act

workable for such people. It was designed on one course. No suggestions were made that would make it workable as it went through the general legislative process.

The minister says that we should not consider net income. I should like to quote some figures on net income, taken from Statistics Canada. In Saskatchewan in 1970, the net income received by farm operators from farm production was \$158 million; in 1969 it was \$420 million. In other words, the net income received by farm operators in 1970 was one-third what it was in 1969. But if you look at the gross income, Mr. Speaker, that is not the picture you get.

I do not have the figures on gross income from Statistics Canada, but in a paper entitled "Proposals for a Production and Grain Receipts Policy for the Western Grains Industry," issued by the minister's office, some figures are given. On the first page we see that cash receipts from the six major grains in the 1969-70 crop year were \$878 million. They were down \$270 million from the average receipts applying to the preceding five years. The decrease, therefore, is in the order of 25 per cent. I mention these figures to illustrate to the House that had though these figures might be when applied to gross income, they become much worse for the western farmer when applied to net income.

• (5:50 p.m.)

I merely say to the minister that if he really did not like the kind of amendment we have advanced, which would take into account some kind of realistic net income for the farmer, he should have taken the necessary steps himself to arrive at a workable formula. In other words, he should have sat down with the prairie Agricultural Ministers and worked out a formula that might have suited his kind of logic.

I do not think anyone on this side of the House insisted on the minister adopting the particular proposals that were made. I do not think the farm organizations which came here at the beginning of the hearings on this bill insisted on a particular formula. They merely said that the provisions of this measure must bear some relationship to the costs of production. If the government had come in with a proposal or amendment along that line, I am sure it would have been carefully considered.

I do not understand how, in this day and age, we can justify a stabilization program that does not take into account costs of production. In our society all manner of people, professional people, working people and people who run industries for profit, as well as those who made representations to the Prices and Incomes Commission, insist on using as a factor in calculations increases in the cost of living or costs of production, as the case may be. Unions bargaining with industries insist on the cost of living being considered. All these people say that unless such a factor is included in these calculations we will inevitably become poorer and poorer while the rest of society either maintains its standard of living or enjoys a larger measure of well-being.

There is nothing far out in insisting on this kind of approach. It is done in western countries. It is as much a part of our present economic system as profits and wages. It is an accepted part of our system. Yet when we try to tell the government this their reaction is that we are

[Mr. Gleave.]

putting forward an idea that belongs to the eighteenth century. Maybe this bill belongs to the eighteenth century.

An hon. Member: To the seventeenth.

Mr. Gleave: Perhaps one day we will persuade the government to catch up to modern trends. I am sure the government is still getting representations from western farm organizations on this bill, just as we are. The Alberta Wheat Pool, in a release dated September 30, 1971, said:

Alberta Wheat Pool's position concerning proposals recently mentioned in the House of Commons has previously been made clear. It seems necessary to reiterate them again.

Then it goes on to say bluntly:

This organization does not believe the grains receipts and income stabilization plan as it is presently written provides adequate provisions for maintaining economic health in western grain production. Alberta Wheat Pool has requested several modifications to the plan, including a provision which would recognize any increasing cost of production.

The ideas advanced on behalf of the prairie farmers are not peculiar to the people sitting on this side of the House. Mr. Speaker, this government operates, through the Canadian Dairy Commission, a dairy program which gave certain increases to the producers of dairy products during the past year. Those increases took into account changes in costs of production and the manner in which dairy farmers had to operate. The government did that last year for the dairy farmer, yet when we talk about doing the same thing in a moderate way for the grain farmer, we are charged with putting forward an unworkable idea. Really, Mr. Speaker, I do not know what to say. I do not know how they have the gall to talk that way.

Mr. Dinsdale: Oh, they have lots of gall.

Mr. Gleave: It takes an original mind to put forward ideas like that. The Alberta Wheat Pool goes on to say in its release:

The present proposal takes no account of the serious effects of inflation on prairie grain income.

The proposal does not consider the effects of inflation at all. That is what the Alberta pool says. I could quote statements made by various farm people in western Canada.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel): Order, please. I regret to interrupt the hon. member, but his time has expired. It being six o'clock, I do now leave the chair until eight o'clock p.m.

At six o'clock the House took recess.

AFTER RECESS

The House resumed at 8 p.m.

Mr. Jerry Pringle (Fraser Valley East): Mr. Speaker, I am sure the opposition is now convinced they would like to bring the House to a vote tonight, so I will take only a few minutes to make one or two points with regard to what is now known as the amendment to an amendment to Bill C-244.