

*Government Orders*

**Mr. Monteith:** The hon. member might comment. He talks about the number of producers in Saskatchewan and across Canada who have used advance payments. I wonder if he would comment on the fact that last year, in the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool, of the total of 69,000 producers, 561 members used the service. He mentioned the honey producers in Saskatchewan. In the Saskatchewan Beekeepers' Association, 56 of 350 producers used the service; and in the Saskatchewan Vegetable Growers Association, 8 of 150 producers used the service.

Across Canada no more than 4 per cent of the producers used advance payments. I wonder if the member would comment on that.

**Mr. Laporte:** The hon. member questions the number of people utilizing the advance payments act, implying that it is not utilized and is something that farmers don't even want.

I would like to remind the hon. member that in western Canada for the last three years we had a tremendous drought, and farmers never had the grain to get an advance payment in the first place. There have been a lot fewer farmers utilizing the advance payments because of the lack of crops in that region and, in fact, have been waiting for the government to bring in a permanent drought relief program. We are still waiting for it.

In 1985 the government promised that it would bring in a permanent drought relief program, a permanent agriculture program, and where is it? I haven't seen it. And no farmer in western Canada has seen it. Yet this member can go on about the fact that farmers do not want or use this advance payment. When they have no crop to deliver, they do not utilize the payment.

I would also like to point out to the member that two-thirds of the payments that were used with respect to the advance payment came under the Advance Payments for Crops Act and not the Prairie Grain Advance Payments Act. It is a program that is required and used by family farms throughout this country.

**Mr. Tom Wappel (Scarborough West):** Mr. Speaker, it may seem strange that in a debate such as this someone from a riding such as Scarborough West would rise to speak, but the Minister of Housing will, I am sure,

remain to hear what I have to say on this very important topic.

As a matter of fact, the reason I join in the discussion this afternoon is because I wondered what the dispute was with respect to Bill C-36, which is the resurrection of Bill C-32 from the last session.

The people of Scarborough West, like all Canadians, know that the health of our nation is dependent on the health of our agriculture industry, on the health of our farms and on farmers. Therefore, what is the dispute with respect to this bill?

Well I am not a farmer, I am a lawyer. So I begin my analysis by looking at the bill. I do not have to go much further than the third clause to see what one major problem is. The clause, and I am citing directly from it, states that the minister is going to:

—guarantee to the producer organization the repayment of that advance, and the interest on that money that is attributable to that advance.

That is the amendment which is proposed. So, of course, we have to take a look and see what is proposed to be struck. What is proposed to be struck is:

—where the Minister so guarantees, the Minister shall pay the interest in accordance with Paragraph 12.(1)(a).

Well, it becomes obvious that one of the effects of this bill is to strike out the interest free characteristics of this particular act.

We now know what is being intended. As a non-farmer, a person who is not involved in agriculture, with no farms in my riding, what is my next step in analyzing this situation? Well, it seems to me that I have to turn my attention to the people who are directly involved. So I started receiving and reviewing letters.

The Manitoba Corn Growers Association, in a recent letter, says quite clearly that: "The Manitoba Corn Growers Association would like to make you aware that we are opposed to the removal of the interest free provision of the Advance Payments for Crops Act".

The Prairie Pools Inc. consisting of the Alberta Pool, the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool, and the Manitoba Pool Elevators, say that it cannot support Bill C-36. They say that the current suspension of the act should be lifted and that the programs should be fully reinstated: "—with the interest free portion intact for the 1989-90 crop year. It is critical that this be done immediately".