

Prairie Grain Stabilization Act

to parties opposite, and was dependent upon certain agreement being arrived at all around. It was also clear at all times that the final understanding would depend upon agreement this morning, Monday morning, between the government House Leader and the House Leaders of other parties. It was that discussion which failed to bring about agreement. I may add that it may well be that if all parties in the opposition had taken the view of his colleague, the House leader for his party, we might have had such an agreement. They did not, and therefore we did not have such an agreement.

• (4:10 p.m.)

Mr. Lewis: Mr. Speaker, the minister's explanation shows precisely the kind of tortuous route that his mind always travels. I was not present, but the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) told me what the conversation with him was, and the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre never deviates one iota from what he is told and what he says. Members of the House know that.

What was the agreement to be dependant upon? The minister answered a question earlier this afternoon in a way that was completely unintelligible to me, and his remarks just now were completely unintelligible to me. What kind of agreement was it that the three or four House leaders were supposed to reach? There was no meeting of the House leaders. The government House leader spoke on the telephone to my hon. friend from Winnipeg North Centre. I do not know how he spoke to the hon. member for Peace River (Mr. Baldwin).

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): By telephone.

Mr. Lewis: I did not know that. Now, I am told it was by telephone. I repeat that there was no meeting of the house leaders. The minister made no proposal to the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre which that hon. member rejected. We made no proposal to him. Mr. Speaker, he is not telling the entire truth to this House. He is weaseling and distorting what the situation is.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. It did seem to the Chair that, before the minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board rose, the hon. member for York South (Mr. Lewis) might have been straying a bit from the motion and the amendment before the House. Perhaps the Chair was at fault. I think, with respect, that the minister did not have a point of order but I felt in fairness, and in the absence of objection, that if he wanted to explain his position, that was fair enough. The hon. member for York South, who has the floor, has responded to that. I think it has been a useful exchange. However, I would hope that at about this time we might try to get back to the motion and the amendment before the House.

Mr. Lewis: Mr. Speaker, in a moment you will see my reason for answering the minister. I say this with great seriousness. When members of this House and the people of Canada read in the press that there has been an understanding among ministers of the Crown, the federal minister and three provincial ministers, it is important for Parliament and for the democratic process that such an

[Mr. Lang.]

understanding be kept, and that it not be betrayed and breached. I know that the prairie ministers, at least the Manitoba and Saskatchewan ministers of agriculture, are planning a press release to make that clear. I am almost finished, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. It does seem to the Chair, as the hon. member for York South has pointed out, that the arguments he makes, in which the minister has joined, are important arguments for the people of Canada, and indeed are important for this chamber. However, I know that the hon. member for York South and the minister are both learned counsel and will appreciate that the Chair must be bound by the rule of relevancy. The Chair cannot hear this particular argument at this time. There are other forums in which it can be raised, and I need not mention them. I would ask both hon. members to confine their remarks to the motion and the amendment before the House.

Mr. Lewis: What I seem to have failed to get clearly before Your Honour is that the issue of the basis for stabilization of the grain farmers' income was precisely one of the issues that was the subject of the discussions between the three prairie ministers of agriculture and the minister in charge of the Wheat Board. It was precisely what was suggested in the motion by the hon. member for Saskatoon-Biggar and in the amendment by the hon. member for Skeena. It was precisely the subject matter of those amendments, motions, or subamendments—whatever you want to call them. That was one of the subjects of discussion with the minister last Friday, and therefore it is relevant.

I say that it is important for these agreements to be kept. It is important for the Members of Parliament, to make the government honest in keeping such agreements. Because the minister and the government broke that agreement, and because we of the NDP, and I hope others on this side of the House, will not be parties to the breaching of that kind of agreement by having Bill C-244 before us when it was agreed that it should not be put before us today, I move, seconded by the hon. member for Vancouver-Kingsway (Mrs. MacInnis):

That this debate do now adjourn.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is the House ready for the question? All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. Members: Yea.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. Members: Nay.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: In my opinion the nays have it.

And more than five members having risen:

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Call in the members.

The House divided on the motion (Mr. Lewis), which was negated on the following division:

• (4:20 p.m.)