

Support for Soybean Crop

Mr. Diefenbaker: Hon. gentlemen opposite should be the last ones to talk about closure.

Mr. Speaker: I think the practice is reasonably clear. The comment which is permitted is limited to comment on the subject matter of the statement which was made and does not extend to extraneous matters. Further, this is not a debate. Although opportunity is given for expression of opinion, this is not an occasion for argumentative debate.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): Mr. Speaker, I thank you for supporting the position I have been taking. The Minister of Justice, who regards himself as the custodian of our rules, did not object—

Mr. Speaker: Order. I have dealt with the point of order. I would ask the hon. member to continue with his comment.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): Mr. Speaker, we certainly have the right to comment on the point of order.

Mr. Chevrier: Hear, hear.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): The Minister of Justice raised a point of order and—

Some hon. Members: Sit down.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I thought I had disposed of the point of order, but I did not hear the hon. member on it. If he wishes to say something on it I will certainly hear it.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister of Agriculture referred to the reduction in the floor price in the United States. The Minister of Justice did not criticize or take issue with his colleague's right so to do; and I was commenting on the reduction in the floor price in the United States when my genial friend the Minister of Justice, in his state of war with one of the provinces, suggested that I was out of order.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I noted that at the time the point of order was raised the hon. member was speaking on that matter which had been raised in the statement. That particular part did not seem to me to be objectionable.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for again coming to my assistance. As the Minister of Agriculture said, the United States has reduced its floor price by 24 cents. I indicated some days ago that I hoped that it would not be necessary for Canada to follow the course that had been taken there, because the situation is not comparable.

I thank the minister first of all for so readily answering my question of yesterday, but again I must express on behalf of the soybean growers of Canada—

[Mr. Chevrier.]

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Martin (Essex East):—particularly those in southwestern Ontario, our regret that the government by its policy of attrition is gradually withdrawing from the floor price policy that it announced some time ago to the people of the country.

Mr. Hazen Argue (Assiniboia): Mr. Speaker, I do not know why the hon. member for Essex East should be so profuse in his thanks to the Minister of Agriculture for making this announcement.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): I want a better result.

Mr. Argue: My only comment is that if this is to be the result of questions by the hon. member for Essex East in the future, then in the interests of agriculture in this country we hope the hon. member will cease and desist.

I notice that the Minister of Agriculture went to the United States to find an excuse for reducing the price of soybeans in Canada. If this is to be a consistent attitude on the part of the Minister of Agriculture and the government, then of course there should be an immediate deficiency payment on wheat since the price of wheat in the United States is being increased for the present crop year. But as I said in commenting on the last statement of the Minister of Agriculture when announcing another lower support price, it has become a consistent attitude and policy of the government to reduce step by step, in a piecemeal but rather consistent way, the floor prices on agricultural products.

This is a very regrettable announcement, Mr. Speaker. It shows that the government has abandoned any pretence of maintaining floor prices based on the farmers' costs of production. We can only say that we are certain this announcement will result in the same type of adverse comment already made with respect to many previous announcements of the minister during this session.

CROP INSURANCE

PROVISION FOR FEDERAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO PROVINCIAL SCHEMES

Hon. D. S. Harkness (Minister of Agriculture) moved that the house go into committee at the next sitting to consider the following resolution, which has been recommended to the house by His Excellency:

That it is expedient to introduce a measure to provide for the payment of contributions and the making of loans by the Minister of Finance out of the consolidated revenue fund, in respect of the operation of provincial schemes for crop insurance.

Motion agreed to.