

*Prairie Grain Stabilization Act*

not then obtainable in Canada because of wartime conditions, and the price was fixed at six cents per pound.

A great many farmers, including many in my area of Peace River, grew rapeseed as a means of stabilizing their income. But what happened when the war ended? The materials for which rapeseed was a substitute were brought in. Mr. Ross, a former member of the Liberal party, and some of the farming community attempted to establish rapeseed as an additional crop in western Canada. Mr. Ross sought from the Liberal government of the day an agreement that rapeseed would be brought under the Railway Act at the Crowsnest Pass rates in order to encourage people to grow it. An attempt was made at that time to persuade the Department of Agriculture to develop other uses for this crop for the sake of farmers in western Canada, but the Liberal government of the day rejected these proposals out of hand.

After the 1958 election, with a number of hon. members from this House, including Mr. Rapp who was at one time whip of this party, I attempted to persuade the government and the then Minister of Agriculture, now the hon. member for Calgary Centre (Mr. Harkness), that there was a future for rapeseed in western Canada. We felt that it would have an effect in establishing farm income, which is the objective of the legislation we are now considering. We took the initiative, and with the encouragement of the government appeared before the then Board of Railway Commissioners as witnesses. Eleven or twelve Members of Parliament from western Canada fought this case before the board in an attempt to secure a judgment that rapeseed was a grain within the meaning of the Railway Act. The few Liberal members from western Canada who were around at that time made no attempt to join us in this project. We lost the case but we did excite the interest of a great many people.

With the further encouragement of the government, the hon. member for Calgary Centre, then Minister of Agriculture, and the hon. member for Prince Edward-Hastings (Mr. Hees), then Minister of Transport, the Railway Act was amended and rapeseed was declared to be a grain. The Department of Agriculture then launched a program which has since led to greater and more effective use of rapeseed as an alternative and additional source of revenue to stabilize farm income in western Canada. The Liberal party, then the official opposition, did nothing to assist in this program. I point that out, Mr. Speaker, as an illustration of the fact that as far as the Liberal party is concerned western Canada can expect very little in the way of intelligent assistance.

(3:30 p.m.)

**An hon. Member:** That is not right.

**Mr. Baldwin:** The refuge of weak minds is to say "That is not right." The hon. member does not know what he is talking about. If he did, I would engage him in debate. I simply leave it at that.

The minister is attempting to say to the opposition that when the government brings in legislation dealing with

[Mr. Baldwin.]

agriculture, because the Liberal party brought it in it must be good and we should accept it. During the period 1959-61 agriculture in western Canada was faced with a crisis. The then Prime Minister, the right hon. member for Prince Albert (Mr. Diefenbaker), and the members from western Canada formulated a proposal for acreage payments. We did not need to have legislation as a means of bribing the farmers, as is the case here. The minister shakes his head. Political bribery is the middle name of the Liberal party; they are experts at it. I do not approve of the procedural practice that was followed at that time, but in that case it was essential. An item was inserted in the estimates and the acreage payments were made quickly and simply. Subsequently, other sound, useful agriculture legislation was introduced. I suggest a little humility and learning to the minister. He should study history. If he examines what the Conservative party did when in power with regard to farmers in eastern and western Canada and with regard to agriculture, there may still be some hope of his becoming a good minister.

My colleagues dealt extensively with the defects of this legislation. I hope the minister will deal with some of the objections which have been voiced. In spite of what has been said, I hope that he will show that he has the kind of flexible mind which is necessary in connection with legislative proposals and that he will entertain amendments.

Instead of a program of farm stabilization which, as stated by my colleagues, stabilizes poverty in western Canada, we need a program which will improve the position of the agricultural community in the west in order to persuade the farmers to stay on the farms as useful and active members of our society. I hope the minister will be prepared to examine amendments which are offered and will not turn his head against them. I ask him to be reasonable in his approach. If that happens, there is a possibility that this bill, bad as it is, may be improved to an extent that will make it acceptable to this party.

If that is not the case, Mr. Speaker, I must tell the minister that there will be very strong opposition. There will be amendments to again indicate in a formal way what our objections are and what can be done to improve the legislation. I call the minister's attention to hon. members' proposals. I have talked about rapeseed. Surely there is a case to be made for a means of stabilizing farm income by providing facilities for processing rapeseed in various places in western Canada.

As has been suggested by my colleagues and members of the New Democratic Party, there is a case to be made for the immediate payment of the \$100 million which has been referred to and which the hon. member for Meadow Lake (Mr. Cadieu) suggested may be the stumbling-block before the Premier of Saskatchewan calls an election. If he wants an election, that is fine. If he wants \$100 million for that purpose, that has nothing to do with me. I am interested in seeing that the best things that can be done for the western farmers and the farm communities are done.