

*Agricultural Stabilization Act*

fact, other designated products could be covered by that and it would mean that producers who did not meet the Minister's requirements would have no access to any part of the federal funds, and there is the dilemma, Mr. Speaker.

We have seen over the last few days a number of farmers oppose this Bill. Some Members acted as if they opposed the Bill and, Mr. Speaker, I will never forget last Thursday when Quebec's great champions on the Committee were nuzzled around the noon hour, those Progressive Conservatives Members from Quebec, and in the afternoon they disappeared when the time came for the vote. But I say to the Minister: This may work this time, you may have succeeded in convincing your colleagues to trust you. But you will need to deliver, and I am convinced that the way the program started you will never deliver. I am sure also that the Minister will not deliver because of the American surtax, and I am sure that by the end of the summer there will be disappointment after disappointment, and what he saw with the senior citizens is nothing compared with what he will see this fall if he has the same attitude. If the Minister keeps scoffing at producers who have legitimate claims, if he will not defend them, because as Minister of Agriculture, he is the farmers' spokesman in Cabinet rather than a Cabinet spokesman for dealing with the farmers, and although the Minister was a good Member of Parliament in opposition he might even have done a better job had he stayed there longer, farmers now are under the impression that unfair provisions are forced down their throat. This is the perception that is evolving, just as senior citizens had the legitimate perception that they were being had, as you were forced to recognize belatedly, and it is my forecast, Mr. Speaker, that the Minister will be forced to do exactly the same thing. He will be forced one of these days to backtrack because of this country's diversity. We may refer to unity within diversity, but diversity must be emphasized in a legislation such as this.

In that sense, I am sure that what with the coming events and the failures on the horizon, unless the Minister knows from the horse's mouth, unless he can tell us that he succeeded in convincing the Americans, but since this issue started he admits from week to week that special advantages are granted, he used the plight of pork producers as a rationale for Bill C-25, and he would have us believe that the granting of federal funds, federal stabilization is more acceptable than provincial stabilization. This is what he would have us believe. This is what he tried to tell the committee, that this Bill would be very well received by the Americans. Indeed, he did not consult the representatives of Canadian producers before introducing his Bill, but he did consult the Americans. This is what is incredible. The UPA people told us that they had not been consulted, and one week later, the Minister admitted that he had his Bill checked by the Americans. This is what he admitted to us, that this measure would not embarrass them too much, and that if it made them happy, it might work. This is what the

Minister admitted in the committee, Mr. Speaker, that the Americans had been consulted.

Mr. Speaker, I do not understand his reasoning. Why would his Bill not create the danger of surtaxes while provincial money would be dangerous? Something is wrong in his reasoning. This is why, for the moment, we think that this Bill is premature in view of the lack of consultation and consensus.

The Minister has received telegrams in the last few days. I challenge him to table a single telegram of support. All the copies of telegrams that we saw were from people who said: This will not work. If the Minister has any that say something else, I think that it might be useful to the Hon. Member for Bow River (Mr. Taylor) to know what support his Government has in this country. However, during the last few hours, my colleagues from the Maritimes have shown us some negative telegrams that they have received. We from Quebec have also received negative messages. People from the West have also sent negative telegrams and I am simply wondering whether the Minister is the only one not to have received any. In my opinion, this legislation will have to be reviewed and the Minister will realize that his standardization or stabilization of poverty is unfortunately utopic and that, in practice, there is so little consensus that his scheme will not work. In the interests of the producers I represent. I can only say that I wish that he does realize it because he is now jeopardizing stabilization instruments which were developed by the provinces following epic battles by the farmers. These programs were not given gladly. They were the product of numerous fights to assure at least some income stability and some survival in this sector.

Mr. Speaker, we have only to look at pork, beef, grain or lamb production to realize that Quebec producers are slowly gaining. There have been setbacks in pork production and there will be even more because of the grovelling of the Government before the Americans. However, on the whole, I believe that we had developed valid instruments. In any case, because of the tyranny of the majority, as I said earlier, the Minister will have his Bill in spite of what everyone says. However, I trust that, in the weeks to come, the Minister will use his time off to reflect on the lack of any practical options in his Bill, and I personally invite him to come and meet the farmers of my constituency. I would be very happy to meet the Minister, and I think that it would be in his interest to go also to the riding of Brome-Missisquoi, and I see my colleague for Brome-Missisquoi (Mrs. Bertrand), who would be very happy to welcome the Minister. We could have him meet real people, real farmers who would tell him what they think. I am certain that he would come back with a whole new perspective in the fall. I find this Bill really regrettable, Mr. Speaker, because I believe that the intentions of the Minister are good. The problem is in applying these intentions to reality and I must unfortunately oppose this Bill which, if it were properly amended, could be useful to the people I have the honour to represent. Unfortunately, the Minister has not deemed it