

If I have anything to say to farmers after the 14 years that I have been here come May, it is that anyone who was in the national programs did benefit from them. It would only have to be a government that was completely out of its mind that would put in a program on a national scale that would not work to the benefit of farmers.

Every program that I have ever seen, whether the western wheat program or the drought programs, always worked to the benefit of farmers. Here is an opportunity to buy insurance. Might I state that when it comes to GRIP or crop insurance, farmers do pay a premium. Many urban people feel that all this money is coming from the taxpayer. It does not all come from the taxpayer.

A good portion comes from premiums that are paid year after year. Some years they do not collect from the program. Yet they pay a premium, just like when you buy house insurance. That is why it is so important to have a national program, a universal program if I could use the words so often used by our friends in the NDP. They chose to opt out of it. This trade war continues. We have to come to grips with the long-term program of making food a priority at the international level.

I want to repeat that the Prime Minister of Canada is well positioned. He has done a great job. I am a farm boy. I have seen him operate at as close a level as anyone. I can state that he has never brought in a program that was not a benefit. He has listened again and again to the farmers. This government stood with the farmers. It will stand with them. Just look at the record of the opposition parties on the other side of this House and what they have done in the last 20 years.

The Conservative government increased assistance to farmers 640 per cent. I am not saying it was not needed. It certainly was. I am not saying there is not much more to do. Certainly we have had a government that no one can criticize on the basis of the opposition motion before us today.

Let us be honest. Let us be fair. I am sure that the farmers of Saskatchewan and all of Canada understand and understand very well.

### *Supply*

**Mr. Vic Althouse (Mackenzie):** Mr. Speaker, I note from the comments of the member for Assiniboia that he was quite critical of the 1992 GRIP. That is his privilege.

I think it should be noted, however, that the way the GRIP functions, the 1991 GRIP is the program that provided the income for 1992, the year just completed, and that coverage was inadequate as demonstrated by the 13,000 farmers who gathered at the Saskatoon rally. They criticized the fact that they did not have enough income. The source of that inadequate level of income was from that 1991 GRIP that the hon. member praises so highly.

He did not tell the House that that first effort at the Gross Revenue Insurance Program, known as GRIP, was highly subsidized by the federal government. In the second year of the program the premiums that the farmers had to pay would have increased had there not been a change by 30 per cent. The federal government paid 25 per cent of the premiums in the first year of the program which would have meant that to continue the cost for the farmer would have been 33 per cent higher. He did not tell us that.

He did not explain that the contingent liability from the first year's program to the province of Saskatchewan which has to pick up the deficit that is created from the program rose by \$160 million. He did not tell us that the premiums that the province would have had to pay would have gone up because of the level of subsidization on the first year's program which was there to entice people or encourage them, depending on your choice of words, to join the program.

That would have made the program considerably higher cost at his farm than he indicates. For most of us who are on the farm, the program was getting very close to creating a question of whether the benefit was going to outweigh the cost.

The 15-year index moving average price would have dropped under that first program from \$4.15 to \$3.80 and some cents. The province mitigated that and was able to negotiate a higher level of support to \$4.07. There were some positive things that came out of that program which he did not tell us.

As well, the coverage levels as they are now being enforced go by crop district level which discourages the practice that had developed in the first year of simply using the program. Sprinkling seed across the fields and