

Prairie Grain Stabilization Act

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Horner: Give us the source.

Mr. Richardson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will move on. During the debate both within the House and in the country, there has been some evidence of concern that the stabilization bill does not include all of the measures and policies which western farm organizations would like to see. I assure the farming community that I am aware and that other members of the government are well aware of the policies which farm organizations would like to see adopted. I refer to such important matters as a two price system for wheat, the consideration of a floor price for grains, as well as further consideration of some government payment for storage of grain. Just because these important matters are not included in the stabilization bill does not mean they cannot be brought forward for consideration.

Mr. Horner: They were not in the Prime Minister's speech in Winnipeg on June 2, 1968, either.

Mr. Richardson: There have been indications from some farm organizations that lead me to believe they feel the stabilization bill in some way closes the door on these important matters. I wish to emphasize, Mr. Speaker, that this is not the case. I give this assurance, with the concurrence of course of my colleagues, the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Olson) and the minister responsible for the Wheat Board.

The stabilization bill was never intended to be an all inclusive grains policy. It should be viewed as part of a continuing grains policy. It should be seen for what it is, a big step forward in grains policy and clear evidence that the government is now ready to substantially improve the position of western farmers and to recognize the great contribution they make to this country.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Horner: The government is trying to get rid of half of them.

Mr. Richardson: The stabilization bill is also clear evidence of the leadership and untiring effort over many months that my colleague, the minister responsible for the Wheat Board, has given to his native province.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Paproski: He shaved off his moustache and went west.

Mr. Richardson: He has made a contribution not only to Saskatchewan, but all of western Canada, by establishing a forward looking and constructive grains policy.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Horner: He is now devoting all his time to immigration.

Mr. Richardson: Although I have worked in the business community, I know the farmland and I know the farming community's contribution to the prosperity and success of

[Mr. Deputy Speaker.]

the business community. The issue before us, therefore, is very much larger than the wellbeing of western agriculture.

Western agriculture is a springboard for the whole of the economy, and the injection of \$100 million that would be made within days of the passage of the stabilization bill would not only improve the prosperity of the west, but would be felt beneficially from coast to coast. What I am emphasizing, Mr. Speaker, is that the government's concern for the western Canadian farmer is not based solely on what we can do for farmers as individuals. We understand that a prosperous farming community helps to create a prosperous industrial community. Western farmers by their labour bring into Canada new money from around the world, and it should not be forgotten that they sell their products in the world at competitive prices, at world prices, but that when western farmers buy manufactured goods, mainly from Ontario and Quebec, they do not always pay world prices.

• (3:20 p.m.)

Mr. Horner: Will the minister table the name of the author of that speech?

Mr. Richardson: The author of this speech is standing before you, Mr. Speaker.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Richardson: I am glad you find it so good.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I regret to interrupt the hon. minister, but I do so to advise him that his time has expired.

An hon. Member: Give him more time.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Chair will ask whether there is unanimous consent. Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Richardson: Thank you; I appreciate the opportunity to continue these remarks.

Mr. Woolliams: There were a few interruptions.

Mr. Richardson: The point I wanted to get across was this—I know it is already understood, but I think it should be underlined—that many of our manufactured goods sell behind a tariff wall for prices which are above world prices.

An hon. Member: Are you talking about the \$80 million?

Mr. Richardson: I am coming to that in a minute. Put in its simplest terms, western farmers sell in a free market and buy in a protected market. I point to these facts to emphasize the extent to which the western farmer deserves, and is entitled to, the payment from the national treasury which is proposed in this stabilization bill.

Mr. McCutcheon: You are making history.

Mr. Richardson: Making history or not, I should like to put on record my personal conviction as to the importance of farming to the whole economy. I do not think it