

Prairie Grain Stabilization Act

charge of the Wheat Board or on the part of both parties involved in the discussion?

Mr. Lang: There was no agreement on the substance of any proposals except on the need for further time to discuss a number of them, including major questions about the prairie grain income situation and how the federal treasury would pay an extra \$100 million or \$200 million a year to assist in that direction. There were proposals which did touch on a variety of things, including the legislation now before the House, but certainly no proposals in the material I saw which would in any way link the amendment and subamendment before the House, in the sense that I have indicated both are meaningless and unworkable, and I am quite sure the prairie ministers of agriculture would not be willing to be associated with them.

Mr. A. P. Gleave (Saskatoon-Biggar): Mr. Speaker, that is a good note on which to start. The minister is within his right to say that in his judgment a particular amendment is unworkable, but when he goes on to say it is meaningless he ceases to put forward any logical debate. At that point he ceases to meet the real argument and contention that we have put forward from this side of the House. He is continuing in the arrogant way to which he has adhered solidly since this bill was first introduced.

The real sense of our amendment was repeatedly brought to the attention of the minister and the government when the bill was before the standing committee. It was repeatedly brought to their attention by farmers' organization after farmers' organization who said that this proposal should be a factor in arriving at a formula which sought to stabilize or establish a certain standard of farm income.

● (5:40 p.m.)

It may have been meaningless to the minister, but it certainly was not meaningless to a large number of farmers and the organizations which spoke for them. They felt that this particular point had a great deal of meaning. I suppose the reason it would have such meaning is that the two factors, costs of production and gross returns, are factors that decide whether a farmer is to stay in business, just as they decide whether any individual operating an enterprise of any kind in Canada could stay in business. It is quite understandable, therefore, that it should be meaningful to farmers and farm organizations. I am sure it was also meaningful to the prairie agricultural ministers who came to Ottawa last Friday. I am surprised how lightly the federal government dismisses that visit.

Some hon. Members: Shame!

Mr. Gleave: I am surprised how lightly it dismisses the representations they made. The minister and the government, Mr. Speaker, dare not take four or five days to consider the representations made to them; they must immediately bring this bill again before the House.

The government says that the things we propose are meaningless. I would judge, then, that in their opinion the things that the prairie governments proposed to them were also meaningless. If they were not, this government would have listened to what they had to say. None of these prairie governments has been in power for long. All are

newly elected. The government of Alberta came to power with an overwhelming majority only within the last few months, so no one can say that it is not representative of the rank and file voter in Alberta.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Gleave: In Saskatchewan, a government was elected with the same strong thrust of voter support as in Alberta. It turned out a government of the same stripe as that opposite, a government without the courage to come here and point out what was being done to Saskatchewan farmers.

Mr. McBride: They will tell in Assiniboia.

Mr. Gleave: You have listened to that so long you begin to think it is true. The two governments were elected last summer and, unquestionably, speak for the people in these two provinces. The Manitoba government is barely two years old. It was elected by a slim majority, but when it went back to the people in by-elections it received the unquestioning support of the voters.

In the measure now before the House, Mr. Speaker, this government has disregarded the representations of farm organizations, it has disregarded the representations of the provincial governments who speak for the voters and the farmers in their provinces, and then it accuses us of being unintelligible and of talking nonsense. This reminds me of the story of the two old people who were sitting in front of the fire. The old fellow said to his wife, "You know, I think almost everybody in the world is a little odd except thee and me, and sometimes I think thee is a little odd, too." This government should watch out.

Mr. Baldwin: "Queer".

Mr. Gleave: Well, queer is an idea. With all this weight of opinion, the government still cannot afford to stop for a day or two to give a little thought to what might be done to meet the considered opinions of the prairie governments and the opposition. It cannot afford a few days of thought. Does the minister and the government consider it is easy for us on this side of the House to debate at such length a measure that is supposed to be for the benefit of western farmers? I heard a report that as soon as one election was over we would drop our opposition and fall into line. Mr. Speaker, I want to inform members on the other side of the House that we are not using this bill to fight elections.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

An hon. Member: Tell us another one.

Mr. Jerome: Alf, you are losing your credibility.

Mr. Dinsdale: That is all the Grits think of.

An hon. Member: All they do is heckle; they never speak.

Mr. Gleave: I expected to draw a little fire on that, Mr. Speaker. The bill presented to us is essentially wrong. The minister says that this amendment is unworkable, but in some respects his bill is unworkable. In the three prairie provinces there are partnerships, co-operatives, corporate farms comprised of a father and a couple of sons, partnerships of a father and son, and so on. This bill is not