

operate economic farm units of one, two or three sections. In the term "prairie grain stabilization fund" the very words mean something. They sound as though this legislation could be a real step. However, when one looks at the fine print he realizes what could and should be in the meaning of a grains stabilization fund. What the minister proposes perverts any kind of meaning that should be there. Political perversion is not an unknown pastime of various Liberal governments.

If the minister's grain stabilization took account of farm costs, farm net income and an inflationary rise in either the cost of living or farm costs—it does not do any one of these three things—it could be legitimately called a grain stabilization fund. In essence, all it does is even out an inadequate income. The minister can bandy about the phrases of his agricultural experts and the ones he learned from the law class at university, but he cannot get away from the fact that his stabilization fund stabilizes what has been there for the past five years and has already proven to be inadequate. The minister said he was as anxious as anyone in this House and in this country to make family farms, particularly family farms producing grain, viable, useful and worth while. I accept that; I believe he is sincere, but he introduces measures which will not do anything to improve that income.

The 4 per cent which it will cost the government of Canada will already have been saved. That is not an increase in farm income. The minister will not get away with threatening me, but he may be able to hoodwink or kid some people east of Thunder Bay that the opposition is holding up these acreage payments. These acreage payments will go out, Mr. Speaker. Whether they go out in June, July, September, October or November, they will go out. As soon as they have been sent out, there will be a by-election in Assiniboia and a provincial election in Saskatchewan. In fact, it is very possible that the cheques have already been made out with the names, addresses, and so on, on them but not the amount. We know the minister can do that. He should not kid us. The minister can try to hoodwink the people of eastern Ontario that the opposition is holding up \$100 million in acreage payments, but it is not going to work. We are going to fight to get something better in this legislation.

• (9:40 p.m.)

We are now at the crunch. I will say this to the minister and the government. For the first time in a number of years, probably since the days of Jimmy Gardiner, the government is coming out with something which is substantially or fundamentally different from what it has been doing. It is fundamentally different in its mechanics but not fundamentally different in what it thinks should be the kind of society and the kind of economy we should have. I believe the minister when he says he is in favour of maintaining family farms. But he brings in legislation which perpetuates what has been going on for the last 25 years: it cannot help but do so, because even if the minister is correct when he says the stabilization fund will make it easier for small and average farms in terms of equalizing the farmers' income, he

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has forgotten to say that this income is still inadequate to enable them to survive. Whether the income is stabilized over a period or whether you get it all at once, it is still inadequate.

One has only to consider how many farmers have left the land. In the ten years from 1955 to 1966 during which we were blessed with both Liberal and Tory governments, we lost 38,000 farm units in the three Prairie provinces. We had interim payments and final payments in those years. We had the Temporary Wheat Reserves Act payments, and all of this was based on farm prices none of which were designed to meet farm costs or to give farmers a net return on which they could live decently.

The bill before us continues the same way of thinking. As I said, the minister can threaten if he likes. In government terms, the legislation is trying something new. It reminds me when I was a child in the dirty thirties. Every time the wind blew, the gophers were 20 feet in the air digging. But at least when Jimmy Gardiner came around, he knew about horses and he knew about people. The horses had gone but he still knew about people. Now the horses are gone and these Liberals have now forgotten about people.

They have policies for agriculture, they have policies convenient for the railway industry, they have policies that are convenient for the grain trade, very nice for the Winnipeg grain exchange; they have policies which continue to handcuff the Canadian Wheat Board. But they still do not have policies for farmers. Just policies for agriculture. When the minister interrupted one of the members this afternoon while he was talking about the Prairie Farm Assistance Act, he asked him: Have you never heard about crop insurance?

These Liberals are the birds who in the fifties decried crop insurance and similar legislation when it was brought in by the government of the day in Saskatchewan. These are the birds who said the premiums would drive farmers out of business. These are the birds who have formed the national government of Canada before and since and who refuse to pick up a larger share of the tab in connection with crop insurance. When one talks to them about all-risk crop insurance, they don't want to talk to you.

The minister conveniently forgets that in the main grain growing areas of southern Saskatchewan and south eastern Alberta it is almost impossible to buy crop insurance. Let him just try it. Unless he can tell the House that the federal government intends to triple, quadruple or multiply by five times what it is paying into a crop insurance program—an all-risk crop insurance program—there is no way any farmer will be able to pay those premiums. The premiums they would pay would be a great deal more than they are to receive in one year under the minister's so-called stabilization fund.

**Mr. Lang:** Would the hon. member permit a question? Would he not agree that those areas in which PFAA has been so important might not be exactly the ones to benefit from the incentive program which would induce