

Government Orders

I think that this government has to sit down to review and revise all of its agricultural policies and to do everything possible to help and support family farming and food production in this country. This bill is just one more example of how our government is not committed to that policy.

I have received letters from and had conversations with different producers throughout my riding who have addressed the seriousness of this bill in their own way. They say to us that the bill has no advantages for them as food producers, that it has serious disadvantages. They do not consider that it in any way disturbs our trading relationships with the United States. They ask that this bill be withdrawn at this moment and that they be given the advance payments necessary for them right now, necessary for them last month and the month before.

There are many groups in Canada which have expressed their concern about this bill including the prairie pools in the west, the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool, the National Farmers Union, the Manitoba Corn Growers Wheat Association, the Northumberland Federation of Agriculture, the Canadian Federation of Agriculture, the Ontario Corn Producers Association, and the British Columbia Vegetable Marketing Commission. I could go on and on and on.

The intent of this bill is to get rid of the interest-free provision in the bill. That is totally unsuitable. The bill as it stands without this provision has no value for our Canadian farmers.

The act is in place to try and encourage a proper marketing system in our country. It encourages our farmers to store product. It helps them to maintain reserves, to help our whole country to sustain decent prices over a longer period of time in support of farmers' incomes.

If we do not withdraw this bill at this point in time we will make ourselves more vulnerable to the low commodity prices south of the border. It will have the inevitable effect of accelerating the existing process of putting more and more farmers in this country out of business.

Mr. Duhamel: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for her address. Clearly a number of people who have spoken today talked about the sleazy approach of this legislation. They talked about the misleading approaches of government to a number of things.

We all remember VIA Rail. There was going to be investment before they got into power.

With respect to the trade deal, never, never would there be a trade deal. Of course, what is it?

Remember education? They would support it to the same level. They said they would double research and development. Nothing has happened there either. In fact, it has been cut, cut, cut.

Air Canada was not for sale, they said in 1985. Now it is gone. Remember deindexing? They didn't get away with it, but they are coming at it from another approach. The clawback amounts to the same thing.

I mentioned this morning the national laboratory. It was going to be here, then here, then here. They don't know where in the world it is going to be.

I was really concerned as well with some of the comments made recently with respect to our aid to developing nations.

My question goes back to a comment that was made that prime agricultural lands are being gobbled up by urban sprawl. I appreciate the fact that we need to have a clear policy with respect to self-sufficiency. I am hoping that that is a priority. At the same time I am concerned whether this or any other government actions will have any potential negative effects on the assistance that we normally give developing nations. Is there any chance that that might be so?

Mrs. Stewart: Mr. Speaker, in response to that question I think that the original intent of this act is an intention of this country in its agricultural policies toward developing nations as well. We are trying to help developing nations to have self-sufficiency in agricultural production. We are trying to help them to orderly market those products. By teaching this abroad, by assisting this abroad and then by repealing the same thing in this country makes us very two-faced.

I am very concerned about the impact in the future, the implications that will occur in the Third World if we as policy-makers do not respect the notion of self-sufficiency in agricultural production.

I would say that we are changing our attitude toward Third World countries and that that would no longer be a priority for our operation in Third World countries, in effect saying that agricultural production is fine in the hands of the multinational corporations.