

Western Canada Drought

Assiniboia was preparing this report—he would not actually be able to say that in the future he did not impose that 2.5 cents per litre.

The rest of the announcement was for the consumers to pay for, if the Government decides to do that, only increasing the range, and the feed freight rate freezing, of course, was strictly a charade, a rejuggling of the figures of the volume of grain to be shipped. The question about the price range is something the Government still has to decide about in the future.

The Parliamentary Secretary has told us about how the Government has not welched on paying crop insurance. They have not welched on the western grain stabilization payments, and we are pleased about that. Those are programs for which the farmers pay a premium and surely they are entitled to a benefit if they have a loss, and the Government has done that.

Just to keep the reputation of the Hon. Member for Assiniboia in-tact, I think it is essential that he come forward to prove to the farmers of his constituency that he is not Velcro Lips, he is a person who wants to put everything on the table. I hope he will table this report before six o'clock this afternoon.

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre Blais (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, first I would point out that if there was applause on the Government side it did not come from Government Members. Simply to complete what my colleague from Algoma (Mr. Foster) has just said—and I am proud to take part in the debate this evening—I would say that as usual the Hon. Member for Algoma displayed his selective memory. He talked about cut-backs and taxes on gas, but he forgot the billions of dollars his own Party cost our agricultural producers for years on end with their interest rates ranging between 18 and 20 per cent. Ours have been outstanding achievements under current economic conditions. I think my colleague should refresh his memory.

Mr. Speaker, my colleague from Algoma and the Hon. Member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell (Mr. Boudria) are again asking for the tabling of the report, but I have no idea how they developed such a habit. Probably during the twenty dark years they made us live through, when they got used to produce reports on just about anything. What really matters to Canadian agricultural producers, Mr. Speaker? Not reports, but facts, data, results. And results we have produced, millions of dollars, very quickly.

My colleague from Assiniboia (Mr. Gustafson) was given specific responsibilities and looked after the matter with the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Wise) and the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney). Decisions were made immediately: \$150 million. Payments for the remaining \$64 million were announced today. Decisions have been made very rapidly. Reports are not important. What matters is results.

Since it is an Ontario Member who raised this issue, it must be some kind of an obligation because the Liberal Party has never been a truly national Party, and they are not about to

improve their performance either. The Progressive Conservative Party which now forms the Government is indeed a truly national Party. This is precisely what makes us different from our colleagues because this Government is taking positions which farmers and Canadians generally can accept as being fair and reasonable.

Naturally, our Liberal friends cannot understand because theirs is a regional party. They have Members in a couple of provinces and a few others here and there in Canada in regions like that of my Hon. friend for Yorkton—Melville (Mr. Nystrom), but of course, in the case of the New Democratic Party, its members can promise anything. They may have gone up in the polls, but they always promise what everyone wants. It is easy for them because they know that they will never form a Government. There is no danger of that.

Mr. Speaker, of course, I sympathize with the Opposition; I also sympathize with my friend for Algoma. It is not easy to be agriculture critic for the Official Opposition. It is very difficult in view of what we have done for agriculture in the last 18 months. I would not want to change places with him. It is very difficult for him to rise today and try to find fault with the policy of this Government on agriculture. It is a very difficult thing to do. The same goes for his assistant from Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, who cannot find much to say either.

We just have to look at the figures, at the hundreds of millions of dollars allocated following the drought in Western Canada, we have only to think about the 40,000 farm producers in British Columbia, Alberta and Saskatchewan who benefited directly from the action taken, we have only to think about the \$700 billion in crop insurance payments made to over 80,000 farm producers. This money was spent for Canadian agriculture. It adds up to nearly \$4 billion in 18 months. That is action.

What they would like, what they have been used to, what they have shown us for 20 years, is more reports. Let us write reports and shelve them. Let us appoint others to write more. Let us ask our friends to write some reports. Then, let us take these reports and shelve them. That is all we want. That is the only important thing. Positive results are not important. But all that has changed. For our part, we want positive results, that is fewer reports and more money spent directly for the producers and put directly into the economy. That is the policy of our Government, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, if we look at the results, we find that there has been consultation between the Federal Government and the provinces of British Columbia, Alberta and Saskatchewan. That is practical action and that is important.

I would still have a lot to say, Mr. Speaker, but I shall leave the floor to my colleague—

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton—Melville): Mr. Speaker, we have two or three minutes left. Is the Hon. Member willing to answer a question?