

Government Orders

to time, without any obligation by the minister to do anything more than to listen to what they have to say, is to point out the types of things that the witnesses at the legislative committee pointed out.

A program has to be effective. It has to be affordable. Had this committee been in place to review the legislation as we did in the legislative committee, without the confines of the party politics involved, then they would have pointed out to the minister some of the problems of the changes that are being made at the present time. They would also have pointed out some of the good things in the changes in the bill at the present.

However, they would have pointed out that, yes, this bill does give enabling legislation for coverage to go from 70 per cent to 80 per cent, or 80 per cent to 90 per cent. What they would have pointed out is that even though it allows that to happen, when you look at the figures and the reality of what that allows to happen, it is not affordable for the potential purchasers of that insurance program. It is too expensive.

We recognize that when you increase a risk another 10 per cent on the top end, the premiums are going to go up. What the producers asked for in order to compensate for that was that there be a different distribution in the premiums.

I know the minister gets a little upset when we discuss with him the consensus that he talks about that took place in Prince Albert. I will repeat to him how I could see very easily how he got a consensus in Prince Albert.

Mr. Mazankowski: What about that book, too? It was distributed widely.

Mr. Vanclief: It was very easy to get a consensus. There were two out of three parties present at Prince Albert meetings. One was the federal government that was paying 50 per cent of the premium, and it they had a choice to go down to 33 1/3 or down to 25 per cent. Since it was paying, I could see why it wanted to go down to 25 per cent.

I can understand why the minister wanted to do that. They had another party at the table, the provincial governments that were not paying any portion of the premium and they had a choice of going to 25 per cent or

33 1/3 per cent. I can understand why they wanted to stop at 25 per cent rather than going up to 33 1/3 per cent.

However, I point out that there was a third party and they were the producers who had been paying 50 per cent of the premium, but they did not happen to be at the table that day.

Mr. Ferguson: They were not invited.

Mr. Vanclief: No, they were not invited to that meeting. I agree that they had some meetings across Canada. I am sure they were listened to, but they were not heard.

When the minister says that they had a consensus, it is not too hard to get a consensus of two out of three when only two are at the table and the two both agreed to the situation. Rather than being told that there was a consensus, I think he might better come right out and say that there was a unanimous decision. It just so happened that everybody was not there. It is back to the situation, the best committee is a committee of three with two absent. This time the objectors were absent and it was not too hard.

If this type of committee were put in place these types of things could be pointed out to the minister from time to time. The minister said a minute ago that the United States is talking about withdrawing support to any crop insurance program federally in the United States. That may be true. I know that this present government takes a tremendous amount of direction from the United States.

Mr. Mazankowski: Only when you tell us to.

Mr. Vanclief: No, no, not only when we tell you. You take a tremendous amount of direction from south of the border. That is quite obvious and it is becoming more obvious to the farm community every day.

Mr. Mazankowski: So does your premier.

Mr. Vanclief: I would like to point out to the minister that just because it is done south of the border does not make it right. I hope he listens to that and realizes it.

This type of committee could point out to the minister the responses that they gave to us at the legislative committee. We had a group there from the province of Saskatchewan. We all know the problems that the province of Saskatchewan is going through right now. Unfortunately, in the agricultural field they are suffering greater than any other province at the present time because of the weather and the grain price situations,