

Mr. Speaker, it was in all the newspapers, and I just quoted an example from a Quebec newspaper, but I could also quote from the *Calgary Herald*, which says:

[*English*]

"Agriculture Bill appears to be waste of effort".

[*Translation*]

And he comments in great detail on the Bill. Mr. Speaker, no one at this time seems to think the Bill meets their needs and expectations.

The Minister claims there is no risk involved and that the Bill is just going to be a kind of testing ground. I have the impression the entire Bill is some kind of test balloon. Lately, the Minister has been unable to convince his fellow Members from Quebec that there is any justification for this Bill. He only managed to twist their arms, Mr. Speaker.

I was very pleased to hear the Parliamentary Secretary wonder about last night's voting. He must know that the Whip had to go down and make Members go upstairs, because they were not very keen.

Mr. Speaker, unless the Hon. Members who confirmed this had shaky knees . . . All I can say is, I am convinced that this Bill has created considerable concern within the Conservative caucus. And if it is not real, that means Hon. Members are not doing their job and that they are not properly representing the interests of their own producers.

● (1810)

The Minister should realize the responsibilities and mandate given to his Quebec colleagues by their electors. One of those responsibilities is to represent them with dignity in this House and they certainly would not be assuming those responsibilities if they were to cave in under ministerial pressure.

Mr. Speaker, the issue of regional production costs has been the main topic since debate began on this Bill. A few minutes ago I was talking to farmers who told me: It is impossible, it is illusory to think that costs are the same throughout Canada. In their brief they asked for the establishment of a system acknowledging the existing cost difference. Last night our colleagues introduced an amendment which would have accomplished that to a point so as to take regional concerns into account, but the Progressive Conservative Members voted against it, Mr. Speaker. Once again that is what I call the tyranny of the majority. But the Minister will have to live with the consequences of his action, just as he will have to explain next July 25 his failure to convince the Americans not to impose the surtax. Indeed, Mr. Speaker, I am prepared to bet that the Minister will again lose the last round to the American authorities.

I can tell you as well that the Minister will have to chose his words very carefully if he hopes to hide from Canadian and Quebec farmers the fact that his departmental budget is to be reduced by \$50 million. He will also have to skate in circles

once he starts tinkering around with the dairy policy. He should not forget to sharpen his skates.

Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, this Bill does not meet the legitimate aspirations of Quebec producers. As an example I told the Minister about one of my constituents who last year got \$24 through the provincial pork stabilization program to which he has contributed. He was offered another program, a federal program which I describe as "stabilization of misery"—\$6.54 to boot—except that APU members did not get it. It was promised to him all right, but he is still waiting, so given the difference can the Minister blame the producer? Can the Minister blame the producer who would rather keep his own program? Surely the Minister understands and agrees with me that the producer wants to keep the benefits and advantages he already has. As the saying goes, a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush!

As a producer himself the Minister would certainly opt for the provincial solution if he were in the same dilemma. I am sure of that. But he is the Minister responsible, he has his marching orders, so I understand he is forced to ignore this legitimate request but I do find that unacceptable. As a result, Mr. Speaker, it is as though the Minister is attempting to rewrite the Canadian Constitution, for he takes it upon himself to have the last word with respect to agricultural stabilization. Only the Minister will have the right of veto. In fact we have just witnessed the creation of a federal right of veto over everything connected with stabilization in Canada.

That is the kind of power the Minister wants to assume, yet agriculture is a joint federal-provincial jurisdiction under the provisions of the Canadian Constitution. The Minister will have a lot of difficulty when he attempts to explain his reasoning to Quebec producers.

I deplore the fact that the Minister did not see fit to consult more, for I am sure he might have been able to come up with a more realistic and more understanding amendment.

The Minister himself was forced to issue a rather half-baked press release on the meaning of his amendment, trying to run with the hare and hunt with the hounds. But by doing so no one was satisfied and it is my view, Mr. Speaker, that over the coming weeks, and the coming months, and the coming years probably, the Minister will realize that his program does not interest many people. What will happen unfortunately, is that producers who will be counting on what they already have will be penalized by the federal stabilization program. Those people also are federal taxpayers, and under Bill C-25, if they do not meet the Minister's requirements, they can never get federal funds, which is not good enough in a confederation such as ours. It is not good enough that the program should have no flexibility. Mr. Speaker, the Minister could tell us that in the past we have had similar examples. Well, we did, and indeed we paid dearly, and I thought the Minister would have learned their lesson from last year's Bill C-54. I thought the Minister would also learn his lesson from other programs. In