

Prairie Grain Advance Payments Act

matter: if it is in fact defective it could, of course, be cured by unanimous consent. Therefore, in accordance with the special order made earlier today the Chair will now put motions Nos. 2, 3, 4 and 5 which are grouped for the purpose of debate.

● (9:00 p.m.)

Mr. MacLean: Mr. Speaker, perhaps the House would be agreeable to standing these at the moment and to proceeding with the one in the name of the hon. member for Crowfoot (Mr. Horner), No. 9.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Hon. members have heard the suggestion. Is there unanimous consent that we now proceed to the consideration of motion No. 9? My notes indicate that earlier today there was a special order made regarding motions Nos. 8 and 9, which might be considered and disposed of separately; in my view that there is no conflict with other motions is confirmed. Does the House agree to consider motion No. 9?

Mr. Gleave: On a point of procedure, Mr. Speaker, I wonder whether you are prepared to give an opinion on No. 7 as well as No. 6? If I recall correctly, I believe that when the order of business was given to the House this afternoon the question was also raised as to whether motion No. 7 was acceptable to the Chair, and this would influence my attitude to the bill to a very great extent. I wonder whether you would be prepared to give an opinion at the present time on motion No. 7 as well as No. 6.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Chair did not make a ruling regarding motion No. 6. I was anxious merely to indicate to hon. members that there is some doubt in the mind of the Chair as to the procedural acceptability of motion No. 6. As hon. members will recall, earlier today the Speaker indicated that there was some doubt in the mind of the Chair as to the procedural acceptability of motion No. 7. I think that the point taken by the hon. member for Saskatchewan-Biggar is a very good one. Although I have not made a decision in this regard, it does seem to me there is an interrelationship between motions Nos. 6 and 7. Without deciding the matter, it does seem to me that if motion No. 6 is defective it can be cured by unanimous consent, if hon. members so wish.

Without suggesting what hon. members might like to do, it seems to me that if motion No. 7 is defective it can be cured in the same way so that hon. members have the benefit of debating both motions and making a decision upon them. For the present the Chair does not take a position on either motion. The purpose of my remarks regarding motion No. 6 is that in view of further reflection on the remarks made this morning in relation to motion No. 7 it did appear to the Chair that motion No. 6 might also be defective. So I think they could be dealt with en bloc.

Mr. Gleave: I trust Your Honour will excuse me if I do not understand, but am I correct in saying that you are deferring your decision until a later time?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Yes, the hon. member understands me correctly. I should like to defer a decision on

[Mr. Deputy Speaker.]

motions Nos. 6 and 7 till a later date. My remarks on motion No. 6 were only to put hon. members on notice that the Chair thought it might be defective procedurally, as it was indicated earlier today that motion No. 7 might also be defective procedurally. When those motions are reached, the Chair will invite suggestions and assistance on both motions from hon. members.

Mr. Horner: Then may we take motion No. 9, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: There was a very helpful intervention regarding motions Nos. 6 and 7. I will ask hon. members whether there is unanimous consent to proceed to the consideration of motion No. 9.

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. J. H. Horner (Crowfoot) moved motion No. 9:

That Bill C-239, an act to amend the Prairie Grain Advance Payments Act, be amended by adding the following words immediately after the word "interest" in line 34 at page 11:

"to be set at one per cent above the average rate paid by the Canadian Wheat Board on its borrowing, this rate"

He said: Mr. Speaker, I would gladly not speak at all if I felt that the House were in a mood to accept this amendment. However, having had no such indication I should like to try and persuade the House that all hon. members should view this legislation in a non-partisan manner and be prepared to pass it with the farmers' interests at heart. Surely that was the initial purpose of this particular piece of legislation. No other piece of legislation had the farmers' interests more at heart than the cash advance legislation that was brought before Parliament in 1957. It was not put before Parliament at that time as a grandiose scheme, as a cure-all for all the ills of agriculture in western Canada. It was brought forward for a specific reason, namely, to help the farmers out of the difficult position in which they found themselves at the time, with huge amounts of grain on hand and no cash.

There was a long debate on the application and feasibility of giving cash advances on grain stored on farms. Many members of the House at that time argued that it was not feasible to do this. Many members of the Liberal Party argued that it just could not be done, that it was an infeasible step, that chaos would develop, that the Canadian Wheat Board would be wrecked, and so on and so forth. History has proved them wrong, because the cash advance legislation has been on the statute books now for something like 14 to 15 years and has worked rather successfully. It was used in the years when large amounts of grain were in the hands of the farmers and deliveries were rather late. In such times farmers were in dire need of cash and they took their cash advances under this legislation. A couple of years ago the legislation was amended and this in essence put the farmer in a very difficult position so he could hardly repay his cash advances.

May I briefly summarize the point that I am attempting to make. The initial cash advance legislation was based in theory on the fact that a farmer could get 50 cents per