Act next year than they are getting this year, because, as Senator Barootes accurately pointed out, the cash advance is tied to the intial price for grain, and Senator Murray made it perfectly clear in the chamber today that the initial price for wheat will be going down because this government will not support it at its present level. Therefore, as the initial price of wheat goes down—

• (1450)

Hon. Lowell Murray (Leader of the Government and Minister of State for Federal-Provincial Relations): I said that the decision would be announced in mid-April; that is what I said.

Senator Argue: Exactly, and the decision will be to put the price down; that is perfectly clear—

Senator Murray: That is my honourable friend's statement; it is not mine.

Senator Argue: Honourable senators, we will see. After the middle of April, we will have that debate that you are always inviting us to partake in, and I would be very happy to say I was wrong, that the government held the price; that the government risked $500 million to support the price of prairie grain at current initial prices, but I am afraid I will not be—

Senator Olson: Those prices are too low already.

Senator Argue: Of course. The bankers say—

Senator Murray: Are the two honourable senators making a recommendation in this regard?

Senator Argue: A recommendation that it be held?

Senator Murray: Senator Argue and Senator Olson are recommending that it be increased, as I understand it.

Senator Argue: Absolutely. The Americans get $6 a bushel; the famers in Canada get $3 per bushel on high-grade wheat. The American farmer gets $6 per bushel on average wheat at his farm gate. The farmer in western Canada gets $3 per bushel for high-grade wheat. But now a lot of the crop is low-grade wheat, and for that he gets $2 per bushel. Then the debt review boards come along. One member of the debt review board, in my hearing, said: "It is a joke. The only good thing about the debt review board is that they made me a member and I get $150 per day."

Senator Murray: Who said that?

Senator Argue: I am not naming any names, but I heard it and others heard it, so you can just accept it. I tell you it is accurate. He further said: "It is just a kind of social gathering. It would be more pleasant if it were a tea party." He went on to say: "We hear the stories—"

Senator Barootes: Who was this person?

Senator Argue: I know you would like to cut me off, but this was said by a member of one of your boards. This was a member of your debt review board who is paid. He said: "The board is a joke; it has no power." I am sure we will hear many of them say it, because it is all true. They have absolutely no power; they have no teeth. What these appointees of the government will be doing is coaxing farmers to sign off, instead of providing a means whereby they can stay on their farms.

Senator Frith: Is that $6 U.S.?

Senator Argue: No, that is $6 Canadian. Thank you, senator, for keeping me accurate. The American gets roughly $6 Canadian. Our farmer gets $3, and the senators on the other side of this house are ready to knock that down. I do not know whether they want to knock it down 10 per cent, or whatever, but that is the way in which they are going, or at least that is where I think they are going.

A year ago there was a rumour around here that in January the government was going to bring in debt legislation with some teeth in it. However, the Royal Bank decided that there would not be any teeth in it, so it started a lobby campaign. The Royal Bank won and the farmers lost, and there are no teeth in the debt legislation.

The bill that is before us today tidies up in some important ways an act that has been on the statute books for a long time. The cash advance legislation has been good legislation. It is interest-free. The difficulty is that if this legislation is being introduced as a major program to help solve the farm situation out there, then it is not at all effective. Any effect this bill will have will be marginal, and we will be looking to the government for real action in the very near future because, unless there is action forthcoming, there will be a tremendous exodus of farmers from the land. There will be many heartbroken people out there and, because everyone's equity is going down, agriculture is being virtually destroyed.

Therefore, the challenge to members on the government side of the house is to bring in legislation that will have real meaning and will go a long way in being effective in meeting what is a very urgent crisis in agriculture, a crisis that is adversely affecting many communities in Canada.

Senator Olson: Honourable senators, I would like to adjourn the debate until tomorrow, because I want to see Senator Barootes' speech in print before I deal with it. I am sure he does not want to leave it in its present form.

On motion of Senator Olson, debate adjourned.

MARRIAGE (PROHIBITED DEGREES) BILL

SECOND READING—DEBATE ADJOURNED

Hon. Nathan Nurgitz moved the second reading of Bill S-5, An Act to amend and consolidate the laws prohibiting marriage between related persons.

He said: Honourable senators, very briefly, Bill S-5 is a very simple bill. In fact, it might almost be described as "housekeeping". It is a bill to amend and consolidate the laws prohibiting marriage between related persons. This bill clarifies the public general law in Canada prohibiting marriage between related persons by enacting what we think is a complete code. In the case of persons related by blood, it reaffirms the law that persons may not marry if they are related lineally or if they are brothers and sisters, but it