

Government Orders

Mr. Vanclief: You forgot us. We helped.

Mr. Cardiff: Yes. Mr. Speaker, I want to say, as well, that we thank all parties in the House of Commons for the co-operation they extended to us. They recognize the importance of this legislation and how necessary it is to have it implemented as quickly as possible.

Many things have been said about the legislation. We have been accused of hurrying it through the House of Commons in the process. As I said before, from the timeframe and the consultations held with producers across this country, the 19 producers on that committee, I believe this is legislation that everybody should be very proud of because they played a very major role in its development.

It is now up to us to give quick passage to Bill C-98, and allow the Senate to deliberate on the bill. It is the first time in a long while the farmers and producers of this country have had such a major, comprehensive piece of legislation that offers the long-term security and bankable programs this legislation does.

We wish more provinces would offer the NISA program, because we believe that GRIP and NISA are compatible with one another and would give that much more security to the farm economy as well.

I will close my remarks by asking my colleagues if they could give quick passage to this legislation, because I believe it is absolutely necessary and the producers are looking for it.

Mr. Maurice Foster (Algoma): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have an opportunity to say a few words at the third reading stage of Bill C-98, the Farm Income Protection Act. This is extremely important legislation.

Unfortunately it is not legislation which spells out exactly what arrangements will be provided to producers of agriculture products, but rather provides a framework for the government to put in place agreements with provincial governments and with producers groups. From that point of view, I think it really circumvents Parliament and does not allow for the normal kinds of inputs to be made for producers in stabilizing their incomes.

The proposals planned under this bill, the Gross Revenue Insurance Program and the Net Income Stabilization Account and the third line of defence, or the

special arrangements provisions probably will be made to work.

I am exceedingly skeptical as to whether the agreements that have been put in place will be in place three or four years from now. I think there will have to be massive modifications to them.

I believe there is a great deal of concern among producers as to just how serious the government is about this legislation. There are those who think there will be a massive payout in 1992 and 1993. Those are election years. After that there will be very little pay-out because of the structure and the arrangements. Whether the GRIP and NISA programs survive no one knows at this time.

There is one overriding consideration and it is that the situation for Canadian grains and oilseed producers is so desperate that whatever the proposal being offered by this government and by the provincial governments involved, producers need it desperately at this time.

The net farm income this year is projected to drop by 54 per cent from about \$4 billion to \$2 billion. This is an industry that at the retail level has something like \$45 billion. At the farm gate level there is some \$22 billion. Out of that \$22 billion only \$2 billion is there as total net farm income. The Department of Agriculture has projected no net farm income for provinces like Saskatchewan and Manitoba this year.

The situation is exceedingly desperate. Farmers are being forced to take GRIP this year because the initial price for grain is not going to be revealed until late July. The world farm gate price for wheat may be as low as \$90 or \$95 a tonne, lower than it has been in real terms since the 1930s. The situation is so desperate that producers feel they have absolutely no choice.

If we look at the three levels of support, GRIP and NISA are designed to stabilize farm incomes and level out the low years with the high years of income. The government has lost all credibility with the special arrangements committee, special arrangements or deficiency payments that are being proposed because it has not made an announcement. It is now the end of March. It is questionable whether any assistance will be made available in time for the seeding next month or early May.