

S. O. 31

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I regret the hon. member's time has expired.

Mr. Maurice Foster (Algoma): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Regina has put forward a very convincing argument at third reading. We are on the amendment to the six month hoist so there could be a number of other speakers.

I would like to ask the hon. member what he thought of the arrangement last July when the federal and provincial ministers got together and carved up the pie in Prince Albert with no farmers being there.

The Minister of Agriculture likes to say: "Oh, there was great agreement on all this. We all agreed to it." When you check it out, P.E.I. did not like it. New Brunswick did not like it. British Columbia did not like it and Ontario did not like it. The formula left in Bill C-48 is the formula that Quebec and Newfoundland have used for years. Quebec has a special way of adjusting it so it becomes a three-way split anyway.

I am wondering if the hon. member really believes that the farmers had any input into this. Was it just a case of the federal government using its muscle power and twisting some arms to get some support from the three prairie provinces because they are waiting on their drought assistance with the farmers not being there?

What you have is a deal of two partners carving up the pie on the basis of a drought assistance payment with the feds saving themselves 25 per cent or 50 per cent of their previous costs and the farmers being left to hang out to dry and faced with 50 per cent of the costs and the federal-provincial government reducing their costs. I wonder what the hon. member thinks of that kind of a deal with the partner who will pay the biggest chunk of the premium in the future not being at the table?

Mr. Benjamin: Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. friend for his question. His point about carving up the pie in Prince Albert is just another classic example of the wheeling and dealing going on among some premiers and the federal government.

In some cases the premiers have been nothing more than suckers. They allowed themselves to be suckered in on this one in the hope that they could get another drought payment and they would not have to lose any more federal programs or have them reduced. They thought they were being statesman-like and diplomatic

by agreeing to pay higher costs on this program in order to get some money for something else. It is the only thing to which I can attribute it, either that or outstanding stupidity on the part of certain provinces.

The bill before the House right now is similar. I do not understand why the provinces of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and P.E.I. are not raising hell about losing the at and east rates which means \$40 million so that they can mill flour and have grain terminals in Halifax and Saint John. That legislation will doom all three of those operations. It will finish them. We heard not a word from the premiers of those three provinces. Similarly, the premiers in the three prairie provinces blocked this nonsense.

An hon. member: It is not the Ontario farmers.

Mr. Benjamin: I do not know of any farm organizations and I just checked with our critic on agriculture.

An hon. member: I will send you a list.

Mr. Benjamin: Send me a list and I will predict who they are. It is not the co-operative organizations. It is not the National Farmers Union but I can predict who it is, all the ones that do not farm; All the ones that do not farm such as the chemical producers. They think it is a good idea.

• (1330)

They are destroying the intent of the legislation, the practice of crop insurance premiums which farmers could pay. If this legislation had provisions in it when prices went up farmers paid more and the government a little less.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): It being 1.31 p.m., I do now leave the chair until two o'clock this day.

At 1.31 p.m., the House took recess.

STATEMENTS PURSUANT TO S. O. 31

• (1400)

[English]

MULTICULTURALISM

Mr. Derek Lee (Scarborough—Rouge River): Mr. Speaker, between 1885 and 1923 Canada collected a head tax of as much as \$500 per person from Chinese immigrants either for the reason that they came from