

Prairie Grain Stabilization Act

This was very kind language to use in describing their colleague's motion but it meant what I had said at the very beginning of the debate, that the whole thing was very unworkable. Indeed, the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles), referring to whether the amendment was in order, as recorded at page 8152 of *Hansard*, said he did not quarrel with the suggestion of the minister with regard to the fact that there is no possibility of an accurate determination under the amendment. Now in its place they have moved a subamendment. In view of the fact that in order to delay debate, in order to stall debate, they have had this long debate on an amendment which they have agreed to be worthless, I would hope hon. members would pay careful attention to my comments on the subamendment which they propose.

• (5:30 p.m.)

By their subamendment hon. members would change the definition of "grain sale proceeds." As I indicated on the question of order, this would have a different effect depending on which clause in the bill it is applied to. In particular I would like hon. members to refer to clauses 4 and 5 of the bill where the term "aggregate grain sale proceeds" is used, "grain sale proceeds" being already defined, or when they are used as the basis for determining the payout to be made to a farmer in a particular year.

Since hon. members, by the subamendment, would deduct from grain sale proceeds the increases in costs of production incurred by a producer, the producer who himself had the greatest increase in his costs of production from the base period to the period in which the amount is being paid would, in fact, find he is eligible for a payout reduced that much more—reduced more than that paid to another producer whose costs were increased to a lesser degree or, in fact, whose costs were reduced. In the first amendment we had an unworkable amendment or one which would be meaningless. It would simply have been an obstruction if the House were to adopt it, and I urged the House not to do so.

Now we have an amendment which seems to increase the amount paid to farmers in the prairie region at a particular point in time on a basis which might be impossible to determine. But with respect to an individual person, where you could more likely determine his increases in costs, there would be a real reduction in the amount to be paid to him under this plan. Surely anyone who continues urging the House to support this amendment, or indeed the amendment to which it is an amendment, is clearly demonstrating that his interest is not in helping the prairie farmer, is not in a plan which is workable and he is only willing to stall the debate, helping to prevent the law from coming into effect, endlessly using up the time of this House to do that without putting forward any suggestions of real merit with regard to the bill.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel): Does the hon. member for Crowfoot (Mr. Horner) wish to ask a question?

Mr. Horner: Yes.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel): The hon. member can only do so if the minister accepts the question.

Mr. Lang: I accept it.

[Mr. Lang.]

Mr. Horner: My question has to do with the stabilization fund. Isn't it also a criterion under the stabilization fund that it will be reduced by the net loss in the grains pools, oats, barley and wheat, and aren't we in a position today that there will be a loss in the barley pool, a loss which was previously picked up by the federal treasury?

Mr. Lang: The rules relating to deficits in the pools may well lead to such deficits—which, I may say, are highly speculative at this stage—being paid out of the stabilization bill fund. But the reduction of the fund by any amounts required to pay deficits in no way reduces the amounts to be paid to farmers, because those payments depend not on the amount in the stabilization fund but upon the formula; and behind the fund stands the clause in the bill which the hon. member continues to ignore, which says that the federal government, where required by the formula, will lend money interest-free to the stabilization fund of whatever amount may be required to make a payment out of the fund.

Mr. Horner: But today this is a grant paid out of the federal treasury. Under the stabilization bill plan it will have to be paid back.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel): Order, please. The Chair cannot allow a debate on this point.

Mr. Skoberg: May I ask the minister a question?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel): The hon. member wishes to ask a question. Does the minister consent?

Mr. Lang: Yes.

Mr. Skoberg: At the end of his remarks the minister suggested that he was undecided as to whether there was any material gain to be had from continuing the debate in the House. Can the minister say whether he believes that nothing constructive came out of his discussion with the three prairie ministers of agriculture on Friday last?

Mr. Lang: Mr. Speaker, I indicated quite clearly to the prairie agricultural ministers that I would always be ready to talk with them about problems relating to the grain situation and the prairie income situation, and indeed we were intending to follow up our initial discussions last Friday with other discussions. We will still do so even though the debate now before the House is continuing.

Mr. Burton: Would the minister permit another question?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel): Again, this may be done only with the permission of the minister. The Chair hopes that hon. members will not go too far in exploiting this possibility now that the minister has completed his speech.

Mr. Burton: I was wondering if in his meeting with the three prairie ministers of agriculture on Friday he discussed the subject matter involved in the amendment and subamendment now before the House. If so, was there any understanding or agreement on the part of the ministers who were making representations to the minister in