

would have to be included in the proposed structure of the GRIP and NISA programs.

I am sure that the government of the province of Saskatchewan will be looking very closely at this issue. I am sure that it will be listening to farmers and trying address the needs of the farmers. I know that Premier Devine of Saskatchewan has done a great deal to address the concerns of farmers in that province. I know very well that he will be working closely with the federal government, with the Minister of Agriculture, with the province and with the farming community to ensure that those concerns are resolved.

• (1840)

**Mr. Maurice Foster (Algoma):** Mr. Speaker, I am glad to hear the hon. member for Elk Island and the hon. member from The Battlefords this afternoon because I think they raised two very important points.

One was the point made by the hon. member for Elk Island about the horticultural industry. We know from those producers in Ontario who appeared here just last week that the shortfall for their industry is some \$70 million just this year. That is just in the Ontario region. We know there are other horticultural producers in his constituency in B.C. and certainly in Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick where they are facing some very serious shortfalls because of the special circumstances there.

I wonder if the hon. member is as concerned as I am, when the Minister of Agriculture stands in his place and says: "Look, if the horticultural producers want help this year, they have got to sign up for the GRIP program in the future and indicate they are going to take the program". There is only one little problem there, and that is there is no GRIP program. The one for grains and oilseeds has been developed over the last 18 months by a very hard working group of producers and other officials over a long period of time.

The negotiations for having some kind of gross revenue insurance program, or NISA program, for the horticultural industry has just begun. They hope that by next year at this time there will be a program. That causes a problem.

How do you sign up for GRIP for the horticultural industry if there is not one? The minister is us the sleeves out of his vest. He is saying: "You sign up for

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GRIP and we will give you an emergency support system. The only thing is you can't sign up for GRIP because there isn't a GRIP for the horticultural industry". I am sure he is concerned, as I am concerned and the horticultural producers right across this country are concerned that they are not going to have any interim emergency funding.

The hon. member for Prince Edward—Hastings related this earlier this afternoon. Four of the prime producers in Ontario sat down last week and looked at their net losses for the last year which totalled over \$400,000. The president said he lost \$44,000 last year for the first time and it was the largest loss in a 35 year period.

There is great concern as to whether the government is actually going to come through with assistance for the horticultural industry. Likewise, there is very great concern whether there is going to be an immediate deficiency payment or support for the grains and oilseeds system.

The minister of finance in Saskatoon just last week said that there is no more money, that this is to support a number of deficit funds but left in serious doubt whether there is any assistance for emergency deficiency assistance for these those producers who are in the worst financial crisis of their lives.

**Mr. O'Kurley:** Mr. Speaker, I will do my best to be brief in response to the member's comments and questions. Generally speaking in the horticultural sector, there are some challenges which have to be worked through. I am sure he will recognize, as other members of the House will, that horticultural products fit into categories of edible products as well as non-edible products. When we are establishing a program we have to first recognize the distinctiveness of that sector of the agricultural industry.

Second, it is important that when we are designing a program, we design a long-term program which will ensure a certain sense of stability and predictability and that we do not go for the quick fix emergency funding that does not recognize a long-term structure and a long-term program.

The third thing is that it is important in establishing and designing these programs that we engage in full consultation with members of that sector to ensure we develop the most effective program possible.