

Prairie Grain Stabilization Act

Messrs:

Rock	Tolmie
Roy (Laval)	Trudeau
Serré	Trudel
Smerchanski	Turner (London East)
Smith	Turner (Ottawa-Carleton)
(Northumberland- Miramichi)	Wahn
Smith (Saint-Jean)	Weatherhead
Stanbury	Whicher
Stewart (Cochrane)	Whiting
St. Pierre	Yanakis—101.
Sullivan	
Thomas	
(Maisonneuve- Rosemont)	

• (5:30 p.m.)

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion lost.

PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

SUBJECT MATTER OF QUESTIONS TO BE DEBATED

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 40, to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for St. John's West (Mr. Carter)—Fisheries—Effect of operations of foreign nationals—Action to achieve conservation; the hon. member for Parkdale (Mr. Haidasz)—Air Transport—impending price war among trans-Atlantic carriers—Government approval of participation of Air Canada and CPA in price fixing meeting; the hon. member for Moose Jaw (Mr. Skoberg)—St. Lawrence Seaway—Decision on possible increase in tolls—Request for reference of Carr report to committee.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

PRAIRIE GRAIN STABILIZATION ACT

PROVISION FOR PAYMENTS TO WESTERN CANADIAN PRODUCERS IN YEARS WHEN RECEIPTS BELOW FIVE-YEAR AVERAGE

The House resumed consideration of Bill C-244, respecting the stabilization of prairie grain sale proceeds and to repeal or amend certain related statutes, as reported (with amendments) from the Standing Committee on Agriculture, and motions Nos. 1 and 2 of Mr. Gleave (page 7252).

Mr. Rod Thomson (Battleford-Kindersely): Mr. Speaker, one of the amendments presently before us deals with the net income feature of farming in western Canada. I ask the House, why shouldn't we have a net income feature covering the cost of living so far as the farmers are

[Mr. Speaker.]

concerned? There is nothing in this legislation concerning the net income position of farmers, and that is something which disturbs me greatly.

The price of everything a farmer purchases is increasing. The price of machinery has been going up. We appointed a royal commission to study the price of farm machinery and received an excellent report from it, the Barber report, about which the government apparently is going to do nothing. The price of farm machinery is an important item in farm costs, particularly on the Prairies. It is only reasonable that something should be done about these costs if we are going to consider the net income feature of farming in western Canada.

The costs of government have increased. The salaries of teachers, university professors and of Members of Parliament have been increased. Why shouldn't the farmer's income increase also? Instead, the exact opposite is happening; the net income of farmers has gone down. To me it does not seem reasonable that we should pass legislation averaging income without taking action in this particular area. Wheat is now being sold to millers more cheaply than it has been in past years, although production costs have continued to increase. It does not make economic sense to have a basic food ingredient selling at a lower price to the producer when the income of everybody else has increased.

Further, I suggest that flour for bread constitutes a small percentage of the consumer's dollar, although the cost of practically everything else has increased. Just last Saturday I bought two loaves of a particular type of bread at the National Bakery on Bank Street in Ottawa and found that the price had gone up by one cent a loaf. What is the reason for that? It is not because the price of the basic ingredient, wheat, has gone up. The minister should consider such matters when drafting a bill of this sort.

I think that the minister who represents the riding of Saskatoon-Humboldt (Mr. Lang) made a basic assumption that the income received by prairie farmers is adequate but he has not made any serious attempt to prove that the gross income of farmers is adequate. If his assumption is based on the experience of the past five years I ask, what relationship will that have to the next five years, the way inflation has been going and with the rise in cost of all the items a farmer has to buy? It does not seem reasonable to me to expect farmers to manage in these circumstances when no other group in our economy can. If it had not been for their increased efficiency, most farmers would now be bankrupt. Some means must be found to close this gap in the cost of production that farmers have to face.

• (5:40 p.m.)

I would criticize the bill before the House and speak in favour of the amendment on two grounds. Since costs have risen and the government has done nothing about it, and since farm income has gone down and the government has done nothing or very little about that, there obviously has to be a third alternative to meet this problem. A logical method would be to evolve some means of tying the costs of production to an item sold in Canada. I have previously suggested to the minister that a good way to start would be with a two-price system for wheat. Anything consumed in Canada should be related to costs in Canada. The minister has been a member of the gov-