

*Government Orders*

sad that in the final analysis it is once again the Canadian farmer who will suffer. I simply cannot support this bill.

**Mr. Len Hopkins (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke):** Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member for Stormont—Dundas knows, this is a very important bill. That is why it should be given more serious attention. The shared cost provisions of crop insurance in this bill are also very important, and the hon. member has mentioned those.

It just seems that the government does not care about the weather and how it affects farmers. It is the bottom line on the Minister of Finance's budget and his Estimates that the government seems to be most concerned about. As the hon. member indicated, it almost looks as if the government's philosophy is to kick the farmers when they are down. This is very well exemplified by the fact that when the farmers met early last July they were agreed on a one-third, one-third, one-third breakdown with the federal and provincial governments on the cost shared program for crop insurance. Then when the federal government and the provinces met at the end of July, it ended up at 25 per cent for each of the two senior governments and 50 per cent for the farmers.

Does the hon. member not feel that this relates to the very important face-saving of the Minister of Finance on his projections in his budget and how he wants to come out looking good on them? Or, is this just another example of the leadership of this federal government in trying to bring the agricultural community in Canada down to the level of no subsidization at all, no assistance whatsoever; let the farmers loose to sink or swim in competition with the American agricultural industry as a result of free trade?

Is this a continuation of the same kind of deal that we saw this government give Canadian agriculture under free trade? Here is another example of the federal government refusing to give the agricultural industry in Canada any support whatsoever because it wants to look good on its financial statements and it could not care less about what is happening out there.

It is going to make the farmers pay more for crop insurance at a time when the climate of this country has been very cruel to farmers. Should there not be a more flexible system than the one in the minds of the Minister

of Finance and the Deputy Prime Minister who are handling this very crucial issue?

**Mr. Kilger:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his comments and his question.

It has become increasingly evident that this government and its policies are largely, if not entirely, budget driven. We would recognize the good intentions of members on the opposite side of the House, but when it comes to delivery we see quite clearly that the bottom line prevails. Certainly this is a time when the agricultural industry is experiencing some very difficult times, as are the fisheries and other areas of our economy. But the level of anxiety is at its peak in the agricultural industry, if you will. When more stability is required it seems to be lacking in the leadership displayed by the government of the day.

It would appear that the biggest obstacle for the government might be the question of credibility. We hear quite repeatedly of its support of supply management on the one hand. On the other hand, and returning back to the *Growing Together* Green Paper, we repeatedly refer to having to become more market oriented. I have difficulty finding the compatibility between those two areas.

The agricultural community is increasingly being brought to its knees. Thank goodness for the farmers themselves and for their inner strength. They have demonstrated in the past how they have been able to adapt. Surely it is not too much for them to expect greater leadership from this government to assist them at this very critical time.

**Mr. Ray Funk (Prince Albert—Churchill River):** Mr. Speaker, we are debating today the merits of Bill C-48, a bill to amend the Crop Insurance Act.

In many ways it seems to be a fairly innocuous bill. It makes some technical improvements in that it increases the amount of coverage available to farmers. It includes some crops that have not been included before. Thus it does not seem to be a terribly striking bill; it is mainly technical in nature.

• (1240)

However, when one looks at what is motivating the government in proposing this particular legislation, it seems that it might very well be another aspect of what we have been seeing so much of, that is to say, the government withdrawing piece by piece from various