

where a government bureaucracy was set up and utilized as an arm of the political party that governed this country. We tried to clean that up in the years 1957 to 1963. I have said in this House that I think it stayed cleaned up until recently. Last year we got evidence of monkey-shining going on in connection with the grass and summer fallow program under LIFT where they utilized the machinery of PFAA. That evidence was turned over the Auditor General's department and was eventually sent over to the fraud squad of the RCMP. It is now under investigation.

This bill proposes another bureaucratic group collecting all the information from the Canadian Wheat Board about the farmer's production and inventory. This means inspecting the farm. I wonder what the farmer's reaction will be to this? Accepting the fact that all parties want some stabilization of incomes, when it comes down to the nitty-gritty it means keeping records of grain produced and in storage for inspection by a new bureaucracy. The farmer recognizes that because he is buying insurance, his inventory is subject to inspection. But surely once is enough. I should like to hear farmers tell me face to face what they think about having their granaries inspected first by officials of the provincial government and then again by officials of the federal government.

● (1610)

Mr. Lang: There won't be any.

Mr. Hamilton (Qu'Appelle-Moose Mountain): The minister is now aware of the type of question farmers will be asking him and his people in the committee.

Mr. Lang: The farmers will presumably understand the bill better than you do.

Mr. Hamilton (Qu'Appelle-Moose Mountain): I hope they do, because I certainly do not understand it. Only a lawyer could understand that claptrap.

Mr. Lang: I will send a summarized version across to you.

Mr. Hamilton (Qu'Appelle-Moose Mountain): If that is the argument the minister proposes to use, quick action will have to be taken by the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau). I know I have touched a tender spot with these pertinent points. I turn, now, to the heart of the matter. I remind the minister that the farmers are called upon to put their own money into this scheme for the maintenance of farm income; and this being so, they are entitled to feel confident that the arrangements will be handled in accordance with a formula, and not by politicians.

It took years for farmers to accept the sound principle of crop insurance, but eventually they did so because they knew it was administered in accordance with a formula. I doubt, today, whether the farmers of western Canada have the required confidence in the minister in charge of the Wheat Board. They remember the LIFT program; they remember that he used the full power of his many words and his convoluted way of explaining things to tell the farmers they had to go out of production. A large percentage of them did so; they lost their shirts and their incomes because of the advice he gave them.

Western Grain Stabilization

They remember that before the election of 1974 he told them he was considering a whole series of proposals in connection with the handling of feed grain, one of which involved putting grain under the Grain Exchange. The farm people of western Canada said, "The minister in charge of the Wheat Board says he is going to put grain under the Grain Exchange." The minister said, "Oh, no; we are just looking at the matter and considering the alternatives which are open." Then a month after election day on July 8, we got it. If you put this proposal to a referendum across the prairies, you would get the support of more than 80 per cent of the farmers against the minister's action on that occasion.

An hon. Member: That's not bad.

Mr. Hamilton (Qu'Appelle-Moose Mountain): However, not content with getting the farm economy into this—

An hon. Member: Did you say 80 per cent?

Mr. Hamilton (Qu'Appelle-Moose Mountain): I meant 80 per cent of the farmers would not agree to the program of putting grain under the Grain Exchange. At the present time, it is under the Wheat Board.

An hon. Member: Still not bad.

Mr. Hamilton (Qu'Appelle-Moose Mountain): I do not believe the farmers have confidence in the minister in charge of the Wheat Board. They remember the LIFT program; they recall the business of feed grain. Then, out of the blue, a year ago the minister began talking out loud and saying the Crowsnest pass rates should be reconsidered and that something should be given to the farmers in lieu of those low rates. This was spread all over the prairies. Suddenly the prairie fires started to burn, and two weeks ago the Prime Minister had to repudiate the minister in charge of the Wheat Board; he sent a long telegram to the Premier of Saskatchewan saying the hon. gentleman did not speak for the government when he suggested the Crowsnest pass rates should be re-examined; he was only expressing a personal view. If the minister wants me to substantiate that statement, I can do so. So approximately two weeks ago the Prime Minister of Canada said the minister in charge of the Wheat Board did not speak for the government; that he was expressing just his personal murmurings.

Mr. Lang: He quoted me as saying that.

Mr. Hamilton (Qu'Appelle-Moose Mountain): He repudiated the minister in charge of the Wheat Board. The minister is very good at going around and around the mulberry bush, but it proves my point: the people of the west have no confidence in his honesty.

Mr. Dionne (Northumberland-Miramichi): On a point of order, Madam Speaker, it seems to me the hon. member's remarks are more concerned with the bill than with the amendment. I wonder if he will explain how his remarks refer to the amendment.