

*Government Orders*

**An Hon. Member:** That is not fair.

**Mr. Fulton:** Eighty-five thousand profitable corporations. So who is the government going after?

Well, Mr. Speaker, we know. We can look at the clawback on pensions or the clawback on family allowance. According to Statistics Canada, the UI cuts will mean 130,000 workers, particularly seasonal workers, who would have been eligible for unemployment insurance, are now cut off. Communities are cut off by today's announcement on VIA Rail cuts. Who is getting the big deal? Who is the sugar-daddy in this deal? You do not have to look too far. The 150 corporations that funded the fight against the Liberals and the NDP in the last election, and gave all the cash to the Tories on the free trade deal, are doing very well. Those corporations that do not have to pay any tax—

**An Hon. Member:** Welfare bums.

**Mr. Fulton:** That is right. David Lewis coined it in this chamber 20 years ago, the "corporate welfare bums". The political leadership is sadly lacking from the other side of the House. The idea of tarring and feathering and extorting more money out of the farm community should make every member of this House ill.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Charles Mayer (Minister of Western Economic Diversification and Minister of State (Grains and Oilseeds)):** Mr. Speaker, I guess many thoughts could not help but go through a person's mind when watching what is going on here this afternoon, although I do not know why anybody would want to watch what we do here. After seeing what happened here this afternoon, I have a feeling of sadness that motivates me to speak.

We did not learn anything about the bill. There were all kinds of misrepresentations being passed off for fact. It is a rather sad display of a system that a lot of us take considerable amount of pride in. Sure, we are not perfect in government, and sure anytime that you ask people to pay something that previously they have not paid for, they are not going to like it. We know that. No government likes to increase taxes or likes to reduce government spending. But when you face the kind of situation that we face in this country, there are some tough choices that have to be made. This is one of them.

It is interesting to listen to the members opposite—and I do not mean in any way to be pejorative—but we do not have any farmers getting up over there. There are members getting up, reading things of which they know nothing about. Unfortunately, they do not make any sense, and maybe from their own point of view it is just as well as they do not know what they are saying because if they knew what they were saying, they probably would not say it.

Let me try, if I can, to put some of this in some context. Anybody watching would think that a bill that provided cash advances to between 15 per cent and 20 per cent of the western farmers and certainly less than 10 per cent of farmers in other parts of the country was going to cause the total demise of the family farm. This is ludicrous. This is silly. Sure, it is something that is going to cause problems with people who have to pay interest. But there is another side to it. Think about the damage caused by interest rates that got to 22 per cent, 23 per cent and 25 per cent in 1982. We are still recovering from that as a farm community. Nobody talks about that.

Those who are connected with the farm community know that all of us work with borrowed money. If they want to inflict hardship on the farm community, the best way to do it is with interest rates. Let interest rates go up in this country and then you are going to see the opposition yelling. If that happens, they are going to have good cause to yell. It is true that farmers are going to have to pay a little bit more for some of these programs, but we firmly believe that without this kind of approach we run the risk of crippling not only the farm economy but the whole business economy in this country.

As I said, this legislation has been used by something in the order of 15 to 20 per cent of all the farmers in western Canada, who make use of it under the Prairie Grain Advance Payments Act. The numbers are difficult to calculate, but the number of other farmers who have used it is probably less than 5 per cent. You mention the Ontario corn growers. There are 25,000 corn producers in Ontario. Do you know how many use the program? About 500.

Sure, if you are one of the 500, it is going to affect you. But to suggest that this change will mean its demise is silly. The opposition does a disservice to themselves and the House to put some of the things on the record that they did this afternoon. Aside from that, if it is such terrible legislation, pass it and let us suffer the consequences with the farm community. You can point the finger at us and say: "That was bad legislation. We let you pass it. Let us go out there and explain it". Furthermore, you should know that this does not take