

Prairie Grain Stabilization Act

it should be based. If one looks at the debates of the United States legislature, he will find that they have for years debated the matter of parity and the year on which it should be based.

The motion moved by the hon. member for Saskatoon-Biggar may be very difficult to implement. The hon. member for Skeena (Mr. Howard) has moved an amendment, which I think should be welcomed by the House because it goes a long way to clarify the situation. The words of the amendment to some extent, deal with the cost of production. It reads:

of the amount by which the costs of production for the crop year within which a levy under section 9 is deducted exceeds the cost of production for the crop year ending on July 31, 1970.

It is quite obvious what the hon. member for Skeena is attempting to do. He is trying to set July 31, 1970 as the base year. Many farmers will not be very happy with that date because the cost of production based on the year 1970 would be low as profits that year were low. They would like a year which would be more favourable. In any event, this is a concrete suggestion that clarifies the interpretation part of the act. How can we have good legislation unless the intent outlined in the interpretation clause is clear?

In my opinion this amendment is in order and should be welcomed by the House because it clears up any doubt there may be in the minds of people reading the original motion, and I would urge Your Honour to rule that it is in order. The debate during the past two days has convinced me that in Your Honour's wisdom you feel there is merit to this motion. If you did not believe that, I should think you would have ruled it out of order automatically. I should think we could have a ruling on this matter now and get on with the debate. The House of Commons spends too much time on procedural issues. I should like to see more time spent debating conditions of agriculture rather than procedure.

Mr. A. P. Gleave (Saskatoon-Biggar): Mr. Speaker, as the mover of the original motion, I find the amendment very acceptable. It clarifies or brings into sharper perspective the manner by which these production costs are to be arrived at. There has been some question raised as to whether the original motion is in order. Of course, that matter was decided after the motion was debated for some time. I must say I feel the original motion was in order. The essence of the bill before us is that there is to be a relationship established between the gross proceeds of the sale of grain over a five-year period and the individual income of a farmer in a particular year in which certain payments are to be made. Therefore, the manner in which we arrive at the basis of income of an individual farmer in that particular year is relevant to the discussion we have had.

Various clauses of the bill go to some length to set this out quite clearly. The bill sets out the lawful charges which may be taken into account by those administering the measure. I have put before this House one of the factors which is to be considered as part of the calculation in arriving at the farmer's income in a particular year relative to the five-year period set out in respect of gross income on the six grains. The amendment simply goes a little further for the purposes of clarification. It says that

[Mr. Horner.]

such and such a year shall be the base year for which we arrive at the cost of production. That is the objective of the amendment. I suggest to you that the amendment simply clarifies the motion and brings it into sharper focus. It does not substantially change the motion, because the essence of the motion we have been discussing is that the cost of production should be a part of those factors used in arriving at an individual farmer's claims. Indeed, it affects his right to claim against the stabilization fund as and when it is set up. This is what the original motion does. The amendment as offered simply says that in the mechanics of arriving at this those responsible shall take a certain year as a basis for making their calculations.

• (12:30 p.m.)

Mr. Arnold Peters (Timiskaming): Mr. Speaker, I listened with interest to the points raised by hon. members. I think these, involve additional problems for you, Mr. Speaker, in view of the fact that the rules we are now using are relatively new and the procedures we are using are relatively new. Certainly, the amount of reference material to guide Your Honour is rather out of date or of very limited use because of the changes in the rules. Part of the difficulty is illustrated in the motion and the amendment. I sat on the Agricultural Committee, as did the mover of the motion. We were well aware of the discussion that had taken place over a long period of time in very great detail. When we moved the motion and presented it to the Chair in the way we did, we did so with knowledge of the discussions which had taken place and the knowledge we had of the subject. We were well aware of the deductions, for instance, that take place in connection with the movement of grain. We were also aware of what was meant by the inclusion of stabilization payments.

All Members of Parliament have the right to make a decision on every piece of legislation before us. They also, it seems to me, have the right to suggest changes in the wording or motions so that what the mover and seconder mean to say is said in a manner which is acceptable and understood. The hon. member for Skeena (Mr. Howard) asked me what the costs of production were and how we arrived at what we considered to be a net return rather than a gross as is mentioned in clause 9 of this bill. I was able to tell him from my knowledge what the costs were that were involved in establishing the difference between the gross and the net. After we had discussed it for some time he gave his interpretation of it and asked if that was what I meant. I agreed that that was what it meant, although it was said in a different way.

I think the hon. member for Sudbury (Mr. Jerome) is wrong if he believes the system we use can be successful if we are willing to waive the time limits that are necessary for the Chair to make the decision. I think he is wrong if he believes that, under those circumstances, the Chair will be very successful for long in making a decision concerning whether or not the motions that are presented from the committee by individual members are acceptable in the form in which they are presented. It may well be that the Speaker will have to confer with members of the House who move the motions, particularly where language and interpretation is involved, because there