

decided that in order to control the production—and we acknowledge that no controls on production and complete covering of costs would create a problem of surpluses which we cannot sell on the international market—we should set the size of the farms. If there was too much profit, obviously the Government could take a look and say, “Well, there is really too much profit here so we will set the size of the farm”.

I think we only have to consider the implications for extending this proposal to other small businesses, such as suppliers, purchasers of farm products and, indeed, any small business in the country, to know how ludicrous this policy would be. Can you imagine, Mr. Speaker, every restaurant in my riding saying they should get a reasonable profit to cover their costs? Can you imagine every corner store, every retail service station saying the same thing? I think once we start down this road, once we accept this kind of philosophy, it will lead us to the socialism which all of us on this side of the House are trying to keep from happening.

Mr. Rod Murphy (Churchill): Mr. Speaker, it was interesting to hear the previous Conservative Member speaking against this Bill. I would like to say, as one of the members of the New Democratic Party, that I support the Bill. I do not have a large number of farmers in my riding, but we do have farmers who understand the problems all farmers are facing at the present time. They are in a situation where their costs are not being covered by the price of their commodities.

• (1710)

This Bill is trying to establish a mechanism so that farmers are indeed reimbursed for at least the cost of production and obviously have a reasonable profit. When Conservative Members rise, as did the previous Conservative Member, and rant and rave and claim that the Bill is impractical, they ignore the situation which exists for many other farm products. For example, the dairy, chicken, and turkey industries already have this type of system. It is not unreasonable to believe that farmers across the country should have some guarantee that their costs will be covered and that they will have a reasonable rate of return for the work in which they are involved.

I have heard Hon. Members speak against this Bill. They somehow think it is radical, yet it happens in other agricultural industries. They ignore what is really happening. In addition, they ignore the fact that almost every other industry is in a position to ensure that it has an adequate rate of return.

Certainly there are bankruptcies in some industries; certainly some industries go under. However, farmers who are unprotected at the present time need something to ensure that they have an adequate income. The only way that will happen is if the House of Commons passes some legislation which provides it.

Farmers have no control over what the American Congress does. They have no control over what happens in Europe. However, they expect the people they elect to the House of

Commons from Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and other provinces to rise and to represent their interests.

Parity Prices for Farm Products Act

The Conservative Member who spoke prior to me said that the Bill would just provoke a reaction from the United States, a countervail reaction or something of that nature. The truth is that the Americans have subsidized their farmers for many years. The truth is that the Europeans have heavily subsidized their farmers for many, many years.

We regret the fact that Canadian farmers need subsidies at this time, but we know that it is true. The Government itself recognized that during the Saskatchewan election when it finally came up with \$1 billion after a very long period of time and gave it to farmers. Rather than reacting to every emergency which comes along, usually during a provincial election, the Bill is looking for an orderly manner by which the farmers will know what will happen to them. Then we would not have the situation where the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) receives a panic telephone call from the Premier of Saskatchewan—and I believe it was at five o'clock in the morning—saying, “Please help me. The polls are bad. Let's do something for farmers. Let's find a billion dollars. I don't care how you give it to them. I don't care if you spread the money out. I really don't care if they ever see the money, but make sure you make that announcement”. That is not the way to do things. Farmers do not appreciate it.

They got part of the money so far and hopefully they will get the rest of the money soon, although we do not know when. However, we are now approaching the next crop year and again farmers do not know what will happen.

We have asked repeated questions of the Prime Minister, the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Wise), and the Minister of State for Canadian Wheat Board (Mr. Mayer), trying to find out for farmers of western Canada and farmers of other parts of the land what the position of the Government will be for the upcoming crop year. We have been unable to obtain a straight answer on it. There is an indication that something will probably come. We do not know what, how much, what for, or when. In the meantime, farmers are out there right now planting their crops and making plans, and they do not know what the Government will do.

The legislation before us presented by the Hon. Member for Yorkton—Melville (Mr. Nystrom) tries to get rid of the very crude and politically involved system which we have at the present time. It tries to institute a policy whereby farmers of the land know that the Government and Parliament of Canada support them and how much money they can reasonably expect to make this year so that they can make plans with regard to their crops and other things. The Bill does not only deal with wheat, it deals with other commodities as well.

I have talked about the problems of farmers. I have talked about the impractical way in which we deal with our problems at this time. I have talked about the fact that they have been given \$1 billion but they do not know what is happening next. Let me now explain why the Bill is necessary.