

not dealing here with one bill; there are about three or four bills tied together. He might just as well have thrown them all in together. This is typical of the government. It reminds me of former Prime Minister Pearson who once asked, "Do you eat a half-rotten egg?" On this occasion we have to eat the whole egg even if half of it is rotten.

• (8:20 p.m.)

Despite many pleas made by other hon. members, no provision is made in this bill for the retired man who may want a cash advance and who has to rely on the mercy of the Wheat Board to obtain a special permit. The owner of the land may be in another country. How does he obtain the signature of the owner? The minister has not dealt with that kind of problem. He has not made an in-depth study of all the requirements. It might be easy enough in such a case to deal with it on the basis of fractions, one-half, three-quarters or five-eighths, making that amount available to the actual producer and having repayment on that basis. I think the department should look at this kind of problem. Older, retired people are often faced with this need. On occasion they tell me, "We have to wait for a special permit until we have made delivery." If it is fair enough for an active producer to take an advance, why is it not fair enough for the individual who has retired? His need may be just as great or greater. He may have just retired and his requirements may be more urgent. I have spoken about this problem previously and I do not know why the minister and the department shrug it off as though it were inconsequential.

A man may be a farmer for 30, 40 or 50 years. As long as he is a farmer we say fine, we will legislate for him. But the minute he quits farming is his need any less? He may have an accumulation of grain. How, then, does he dispose of it? He may have to dispose of it, as I say, in fractions. Why can he not take an advance on that basis? I think the minister should examine this matter more thoroughly.

I shall not speak any more at this stage, Mr. Speaker, except to say that this is a piece of legislation which the minister will have one of his easiest times piloting through the House.

**Mr. John Burton (Regina East):** Mr. Speaker, as the minister noted in his remarks when introducing this bill, some aspects of the legislation do restore the situation to its position prior to some of the amendments which were introduced by the government and adopted by the House in 1968 and 1969. Obviously, some of the changes made at that time did not work; they created more problems than they solved.

I recall that when hon. members on this side of the House repeatedly asked the government what it was going to do about farm problems, the continual answer we received from the government was one of falling back on a reference to the cash advances legislation. I suggest this was like a drowning man grasping at a straw. We said that this was no answer to the basic problems of agriculture. We approved of some of the changes and

#### *Prairie Grain Advance Payments Act*

agreed they were useful, but I suggest other changes created real problems and the government now is in the process of correcting the situation.

I noted implications in the minister's remarks which left the impression that the minister and the government consider that cash advances are declining in usefulness and that they anticipate they will not be used as much in the future. In some respects this suggests a reduced priority in the government's thinking on this matter. This, of course, could have some validity if there are new programs which assume greater importance than this one or which supersede or add to existing programs. But I suggest that no matter what programs are introduced, there is still an important role for cash advances to play in the over-all grain marketing situation and they must be retained.

It is essential that cash advances be retained as a permanent feature of our marketing structure; but on the basis of his remarks this afternoon it seems to me that the minister almost hoped for a reduced use of the cash advances system. Of course, he has some basis for this hope in that on a number of occasions he has drawn attention to anticipated changes in the pattern of deliveries of grain throughout the crop year. The minister now anticipates that there will not be as heavy a movement of grain into storage near the end of the crop year, which now can mean some slowing up on deliveries in the early part of the new year and thus a greater use of cash advances at that time.

I would be happy to be corrected if I am wrong, but it seems to me the implications of his remarks were that he is looking to some point in the future when we will see an end to cash advances. I hope this is not so because, Mr. Speaker, I suggest cash advances involve some degree of acceptance of national responsibility for the grain marketing situation, a situation which in fact has national implications. It affects all of the Canadian economy. It has implications and consequences for the entire economy. In fact it is a recognition that some conditions are beyond the farmer's control and for which he should not be expected to bear the entire burden.

I also suggest that the cash advances system makes possible a greater degree of flexibility in the marketing system because it does not produce the same pressure on farmers to deliver their grain to the elevator as soon as there is a bushel of space available. It also means that the government and the Canadian Wheat Board can introduce measures which can assist in the movement of grain further down the marketing chain. At the same time, I think all of us will recognize that the cash advances system must be adjusted to keep up with changes in the marketing situation, to take advantage of new proposals, new ideas, and also to take account of new problems.

• (8:30 p.m.)

I note the changes in the act proposed by this bill. For instance, I note that the fixed advance price as set out in the act is being changed to a more flexible formula type of price, giving some discretionary powers to the Gover-