

These farmers do not have the back-up of an established agricultural community such as those that exist in established agricultural areas. They do not have the parts available, they do not have the equipment manufacturers, and they do not have the technical back-up which is available in the rest of Canada. These people are pretty well out on their own, not only fighting the weather and the geography, but also having difficulty with markets.

These farmers in the north have to develop their own markets, and some of the markets appear to be there. People are consuming goods and paying very high prices for food. The potential is there, but there has to be back-up from the rest of the country. These people have to know that if their crops fail feed can be brought in. This change in the legislation will allow that. The farmers also have to know that there are programs such as crop insurance to offset the violent disruption a total loss can have to a beginning or even an established farm. Producers must know that there are stabilization programs available to protect them from the vagaries of the market. Even though one might farm in an isolated area, the ups and downs of the market in the rest of the country or in the rest of the world filter into those isolated areas and affect that farm operation just as much as if it were out in the mainstream of the marketplace.

● (2150)

As well as these forms of assistance provided by government, the producer must have available to him some form of intervention on the part of government. Sometimes it may be on the producer's behalf, as, for example, in the form of passing certain powers on to the farmers as groups to offset the monopoly or near monopoly situation which all farm producers face when they deal in the marketplace, either as buyers or as sellers. It could be in the areas of purchasing equipment, fertilizers or farm input or, on the other hand, the producer could be trying to sell some of his products. In either case the people he faces in the market place are usually very large enterprises and concerns that operate in a near monopoly situation. As a small competitive producer, the farmer is virtually at the mercy of these enterprises unless government allows farmers to stand together either in the form of co-ops or as marketing boards.

To sum up, we agree that the proposal before us tonight should go through. We recognize, as I am sure do all hon. members, that this bill will not change the agricultural situation in the Yukon and the Northwest Territories and that it is merely cosmetic. We say again that the land entitlement question must be settled soon. We say again that the technology and the expertise of the farmers in the area must be improved upon and developed. We say again that market structures for farmers which are operated by farmers must also be provided if they are to be viable operators in that part of the country or in any part of the country.

We would also like to reiterate that back-up support from the government is necessary in situations which exist not only in the Northwest Territories and the Yukon but also in the rest

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of the country, because farmers need assistance in the form of crop insurance and in the form of stabilization programs when the market goes up or down drastically, which it very often does in agricultural production. In this case we need the movement of feed grains when required in this region of the country as in the other regions of Canada.

Mr. Len Gustafson (Assiniboia): Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak on Bill C-15 with regard to its direction and its importance as it relates to the Yukon and the Northwest Territories. I have noticed something which I think is most important while in the agricultural committee, and that is the understanding and direction given by farmers from all parts of Canada, whether they are from the Northwest Territories, Saskatchewan, Alberta, Quebec or Ontario. Canada could learn a lesson from agriculture.

I am very pleased to speak on the passage of this bill because I realize how important it is to the people of the Northwest Territories and the Yukon in terms of production. There has been a lack of vision with regard to the north since the years of the Right Hon. John Diefenbaker, who had a very bright vision of the Northwest Territories and the Yukon. We have not taken the time to visualize the potential of this great area of Canada.

It is most important at this time that we give speedy passage to this bill to ensure that there is an opportunity for production in this area. It is something which is very important, not only to agriculture but to every facet of Canadian society today. While the movement of feed grains is important to the North, I would like to relate it to some problems which we have experienced and are experiencing in Saskatchewan now with the drought situation there.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan is experiencing a drought, particularly in eastern and central Saskatchewan and in the greater part of Manitoba. It is most important that we learn something from the experience of the movement of feed grains. I am somewhat sorry to see that the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Whelan) is not in the House to hear this debate tonight. I think we will face some very serious problems in the area, not only with regard to the movement of feed grains but with regard to subsidizing to maintain the breeding stock on the livestock farms. This is most important to livestock farmers.

Just this past week I had a chat with an older farmer in my riding. He indicated that livestock farmers over the last six years have been through a tremendously serious situation. He said, "If we are forced to sell our livestock again, we will not be back in business". It is very important that the government and the Minister of Agriculture take a look at this point not only with regard to the transportation of feed, but with regard to the tremendous cost of feed today. I understand that the cost of feed ranges from \$2.50 a bale to \$5 a bale. If one calculates the cost of maintaining a herd at those prices, obviously it is much cheaper to sell the herd.

It is important that the government develop policies in terms of maintaining the breeding stock on the prairies, in light of