

removing the interest-free cash advance program for many producers will destroy the program.

Perhaps with the Wheat Board and the western oats, barley and wheat, they will probably run the program with other groups like the Ontario Corn Producers and soybean producers. Where such a very small number of producers would use the program, it is questionable whether they will even be bothered running it when something fewer than 5 per cent of the membership actually use it. There is no question that this change destroys the program for many producers. In any event, if producers are in a position where they can borrow the money at the bank, the advantage, according to the Ontario Corn Producers, for those who have reasonable credit is probably less than 1 per cent.

I just thought the hon. member for Prince Edward—Hastings would be very interested in the words of Mr. Glen Findlay. I know that the minister responsible for grains and oilseeds would not want to listen to this, but this is from the Manitoba Government. The Conservative Minister of Agriculture there has called on the Government of Canada to resume making the interest free cash advances to grain producers so that they can continue to pay bills while waiting to sell their crops. He said this on September 19. In a letter to the federal Minister of Agriculture, Findlay said he was concerned that the advance payments to producers were not available August 1 when the new crop year started. Mr. Findlay wrote:

Producers have come to rely on these programs as an essential source of farm cash flow at harvest time. I would urge you to start issuing advance payments as an immediate priority, so that cash flow problems currently felt by Manitoba producers can be alleviated as soon as possible.

It just seems to me that the Conservative Minister of Agriculture of Manitoba is making the argument that every producer group is making in this country, namely, that this is an important means of cash flow at harvest time. It helps those producers in Manitoba who have a low-quality crop. In some areas of the prairies, there has been damp and wet weather during the harvest season, and farmers end up with a low-quality No. 3 or No. 4 wheat which cannot be put into the pool system because the demand is not there immediately. In those cases, we have the interest free cash advance available. For those

Government Orders

producers who have already suffered because of a lower-quality crop, this makes money available to them.

I am sure that if the minister would just quietly let this bill die on the Order Paper or withdraw it, he would be answering the request of Mr. Findlay. I thought perhaps the member from Prince Edward—Hastings would be interested in this communication from Mr. Findlay because I am sure it would apply equally to some producers in Ontario as well.

Mr. Vanclief: Mr. Speaker, that is an interesting piece of information because it goes along with what the other organizations are saying. I repeat, we realize the government has a majority. We realize that the government is probably going to go through with this whether anyone likes it or not, but I do not think it is fair to change the rules in the middle of the ball game. That is what many of the organizations are saying. We don't like the way the rules are being changed at all, but at least if you are going to change them, don't change them half way through the game.

I would like to quote briefly before I sit down from the September issue of the *Ontario Corn Producer* magazine and I believe the Ontario Corn Producers Association has a pretty good telephone line and pretty good communications with the minister's office. I am surprised it has not been more effective in getting its message across. I will read from it:

At present, it remains the OCPA policy to oppose the change (at least until such time as comparable changes are made in the U.S. Farm Bill), as we believe that any benefit conferred via an interest-bearing program will be eliminated via the myriad of administrative procedures (and cost borne by producers) which this program entails.

I think that sums it up.

Mr. Mayer: Mr. Speaker, I have three brief points. First, producers. The numbers that I have here indicate that between 500 and 600 producers out of approximately 25,000 make use of the program. I do not know where he gets his numbers, but these are numbers that we have from the department for the 1988 crop year.

Second, the member gets up and reads a letter from the Minister of Agriculture in Manitoba. He wants the bill to be passed to alleviate cash flow problems. That is exactly what this bill will do. He does not say he wants the bill to be passed to save interest payments. He says he wants the bill or the program to go ahead, and I wrote