

Prairie Grain Stabilization Act

the farmers. If the hon. member wants to be that kind of a sucker, I feel sorry for him.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel): Order, please. I regret having to interrupt the hon. member, but the time allotted to him by the rules has expired. Unless the House gives unanimous consent, he cannot continue.

Some hon. Members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel): There does not seem to be unanimous consent to allow the hon. member to continue.

Some hon. Members: Carry on.

Some hon. Members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel): Order, please. The hon. member knows he can pursue his remarks only with unanimous consent, and there does not seem to be that consent.

• (8:40 p.m.)

[Translation]

Mr. Adrien Lambert (Bellechasse): Mr. Speaker, we have now reached the report stage of Bill C-244, which apart from being most interesting, contains provisions designed to assist our grain producers, especially those in the Prairies.

A lot has been said and written about Bill C-244 and after the debate on the motion for second reading in the House, it was referred to the Standing Committee on Agriculture where it was discussed clause after clause. It is now before the House at the report stage.

According to parliamentary procedure, the hon. member who did not have an opportunity to express their views or else to have the Committee on Agriculture accept the amendments they felt were reasonable, may if they so desire, submit their amendments at the report stage.

Mr. Speaker, that is exactly the case with the amendment now being dealt with, and on which I should like to make a few comments in all fairness to Western farmers.

What does the bill say exactly? Clause 2(1)(c) states, and I quote:

"grain sale proceeds" means the amount of the purchase price of grain produced on land described in a permit book and sold by a producer to a licensee, after the deduction from the purchase price of the grain of the lawful charges that are applicable to the grain on its sale to the licensee by the producer;

Now the hon. member for Saskatoon-Biggar (Mr. Gleave), an expert in that field, felt it his duty to point out to the House that the terms used in the wording of this bill are not clear enough, and that they are too vague to do justice to western grain producers.

Also, Mr. Speaker, these vague phrases do not always apply only to western farmers but also too often unfortunately to eastern producers.

Well-meaning people often think that expressions such as "the lawful charges that are applicable to the grain on its sale to the licensee by the producer" will be enough to give producers the guarantee that the production cost will be included in the price and that the producer will eventually be protected.

In the light of the experience in my own riding and of the facts we have known throughout Canada, the hon. member who introduced the amendment was perfectly justified in doing so, I think, because he simply wanted the bill to express in an understandable manner what is meant by production cost. Part of the amendment reads as follows:

"and after the deduction of the increased costs of production, and including stabilization payments, if any";

Mr. Speaker, the expression "costs of production" comprises many things which, of necessity, are involved in a production cycle; it includes not only seed grain, fertilizers and labour costs, but also capital investment, interest, depreciation on equipment and that resulting from weather conditions on the land being used. All these things must be taken into consideration if justice is to be done to the producer who devotes himself to agriculture, tilling the soil to extract from it what is required to feed mankind.

Mr. Speaker, the people were made aware of this bill and, as it should be if committees really serve a purpose, it was absolutely normal for the interested parties, or the individual producers, to go to the trouble of sitting at a table and writing down on a scrap of paper the suggestions or the recommendations which they wanted to make to the members of a committee such as the Committee on Agriculture.

Mr. Speaker, I hope that you will not be shocked, because I have on my desk half a ton of papers specifically used by western producers to let it known to a member of the Standing Committee on Agriculture what was expected of him in connection with such and such a bill. This is what you see on the desk of the member for Bellechasse. These are letters sent by western producers to a member of the committee. I wanted to bring them here, because it happens sometimes that such harmless statements are merely supposed to be an exaggeration. I insisted on answering each of these letters during the period of the debate on Bill C-244. Why? Because I myself, as a farmer and producer, was often frustrated by the government's attitude. In fact, certain letters that we addressed to it were simply thrown in the basket and we did not receive any reply. The government kept on doing as it pleased, not considering any recommendation from producers.

• (8:50 p.m.)

In these circumstances, though I am a Canadian from the East, I felt that I had to take my responsibilities, acknowledge receipt of representations addressed to me and tell those who wrote to me that I would in due time make Parliament aware of their requests. I consider that the time has now come to outline their viewpoints and invite this government to bring forth precisions on Bill C-244 so as to guarantee these people the justice to which they are entitled and to ensure that they maintain their confidence in the Parliament of Canada.

This is not a matter of politics but a matter of common sense. In fact, fair representations must be made to Parliament whose duty it is to legislate so as to ensure good government for the whole country, regardless of geographic considerations. Conscientious members must carry out their responsibilities and act in the interest of the community.