

Withholding of Grain Payments

accuse those who question the effectiveness of his brain-child, of filibustering and obstruction.

• (8:40 p.m.)

The late C. D. Howe was not, perhaps, regarded as a great sugar-daddy in western Canada but he did appreciate the necessity of giving assistance in carrying the amount of grain which has to be carried if we are to market it effectively. The late Jimmy Gardiner saw the necessity for PFAA and put it into effect to meet the circumstances of the time.

This is all to be scrapped and in its place we are presented with the stabilization bill which will guarantee farmers the level of gross income of the last five years, a level which the president of the Alberta Wheat Pool says has dropped 44 per cent since 1967. We are to be guaranteed this level and we are to put up 2 per cent of the gross income of the western farmer to guarantee it: this is the trade-off.

The previous speaker discussed the legal aspects of what is now being done. I am talking also about the moral and economic aspects of these proposals. The Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) when he came to power talked of a just society—and this is the just society, a society in which they violate the moral and legal procedures of this country, a society in which they violate the moral economics of a large sector of this country!

At a time when there is a serious decline in income in part of the country they propose to remove the assistance which existed, and they do not propose to replace it. We have a Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Olson) who stands in this House when we are asking what is the program for western farmers, or for all the farmers of Canada so far as that is concerned. When we ask what provision has been made for the producers of food as against the provision made for those who manufacture and process in this country, the Minister of Agriculture says this matter will be dealt with commodity by commodity.

He should listen to the radio or read the letters I am getting from producers of potatoes, of hogs, of apples. They are in a desperate situation because of the surcharge which the United States has placed on many of their commodities. The Minister of Agriculture says this question be dealt with commodity by commodity, but with regard to what single commodity has he come into the House and said, since the surcharge was imposed, "On this particular commodity we are going to act". This is the just society!

An hon. Member: Just for Grits.

Mr. Gleave: Yes, just for Grits. If the government and the minister wanted to do something they would withdraw the stabilization bill. But even if the minister does not want to do that he should allow the payments which should have been made under the Temporary Wheat Reserves Act and distribute that money among the farmers. He has sent out a lovely lot of chits, little bits of paper, to all the farmers in western Canada. I have one. He said,

[Mr. Gleave.]

in effects, "If I had paid you, you would have got so much money". Some of the farmers there took him seriously. Some of them said to me, "When do we get it?" I replied, "I don't know when you will get it; and if you do get it, it will cost you more than the amount of the cheque that you receive. It will be a bad deal". But the minister and the government persist in their refusal to carry out the law of the land, first; and, second, to carry out their moral obligations to the farmers of western Canada. In order to get a debate in the House—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel): Order. I regret to interrupt the hon. member, but the time allotted to him has expired unless he receives the unanimous consent of hon. members to continue. Does the House give unanimous consent to the hon. member to resume his remarks?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Gleave: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and members of the House. I have almost completed my remarks. I merely want to say that in order to get a forum in which this matter could be debated, the House had to accept a motion under Standing Order 26 and receive a favourable ruling from the Speaker. We had to do this before we could bring before the people of Canada the injustice which is being visited upon western farmers.

[Translation]

Mr. Adrien Lambert (Bellechasse): Mr. Speaker, if the motion now under consideration is quite important for the western farming community, it is also for all Canadian farmers.

I would like to point out in the first place that both members, who moved the adjournment of the House in accordance with Standing Order 26, should be congratulated.

• (8:50 p.m.)

Mr. Speaker, the reason I am rising in this debate is that I want to show the solidarity which we should feel all across the country. In short, in view of the seriousness of this problem, we ought to make our contribution and urge the government to carry out these measures which have been voted by Parliament.

The Chair allowed this debate to take place because it recognized the seriousness of this problem, and this is the reason why tonight we have the opportunity to examine the situation which prevails in western Canada.

It will be remembered that Parliament passed an act intended to provide western grain producers with a guaranteed income, and that several million dollars were voted for that purpose. However, what is happening now? As a matter of fact the government is blamed for not carrying out that act, for not giving to the farmers, to the wheat producers of the Prairies the opportunity to benefit from that act. That is precisely the reason why the opposition has moved that motion in order to draw the attention of the government and of the public to the seriousness of that problem.

It seems more and more obvious to me that the farmers of the Prairie suffer from the fact that this act is not carried out. Indeed in a speech made on January 28, 1970