

will last a certain time and that each member of the opposition will be able to express himself while limiting himself objectively. The people will thus benefit from an improved service from their government.

So, I invite all hon. members to become more objective than ever, not only to let western producers benefit from subsidies which are theirs, but also to let Parliament work as it should have done for a very long time.

[English]

Mr. Peters: Mr. Speaker, may I ask the hon. member a question?

Mr. La Salle: Yes.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel): Order, please. The hon. member for Timiskaming may ask a question only if it is accepted by the hon. member for Joliette (Mr. La Salle).

Mr. La Salle: Yes, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Peters: I should like to ask the hon. member, and I am aware of his knowledge of the Committee on Agriculture on which we both served for some time, whether he is not of the opinion that the act that we are discussing, the Temporary Wheat Reserves Act, provided for the farmer a payment of something like \$60 million, with an additional \$26 million owing as of July 31? Is he not of the opinion that, in the light of the fact the farmer is entitled to that money, it should be paid and the government should reconsider the amount that is in the stabilization bill and talk about the stabilization bill in terms of stabilization rather than a winding up of the Temporary Wheat Reserves Act? Is he not of the opinion that the law should be enforced today and that we should discuss the matter of stabilization in the light of present circumstances?

[Translation]

Mr. La Salle: Mr. Speaker, I admit the question is justified, but I think that if Bill C-244 had been supported by the opposition, the problem would be solved. I presume it was very difficult for the government to make regular payments, considering the existing legislation, since the changes instituted in the new bill would surely have given the government much trouble. Since the government had the right to believe that the opposition would not be so dead set against the measure, I acknowledge its good will in trying to help western farmers through the new bill.

If the opposition continues to fight the bill, it seems to me that legally the government will have to pay in accordance to an existing act, but I wonder if objectively opposition members would not achieve more by helping the government to get Bill C-244 passed quickly. Then we shall have really served the people, allowed the government to pay the money and opposition members will be given credit for having contributed in this useful way to the payments that will be made.

Withholding of Grain Payments

[English]

Mr. Heath Macquarrie (Hillsborough): Mr. Speaker, I hear some denigrations about potato growing. I know that the people over there have no interest in potatoes, but they need not say so so impolitely. I should like to say that I am neither a farmer nor a westerner. None of my constituents are customers of the Wheat Board, so perhaps I will be a little more considerate and not indulge in the harsh criticism that has been laid upon this minister tonight. I will say that he has been no worse in his conduct of the Wheat Board than he has in his conduct of Manpower.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Macquarrie: This debate underlines the gravity of agricultural problems throughout the country, and the very commodity that one of the gentlemen from Toronto was sneering at, potatoes, was terribly hurt by the surtax, but there has been no sign of any corrective measure taken by this government. All the other things that the hon. member for Saskatoon-Biggar (Mr. Gleave) indicated, are a part of this debate, namely the continuing and crying problems of agriculture with which this government fails to cope. This is just one minister who is culpable and inadequate in this field.

There is, however, another aspect. We realize, and it has been made abundantly clear in the fine speeches that have been made tonight, that a part of the citizen body of this country is being victimized by the impropriety of the government in not obeying the laws of the land, and that body is the farming community in Canada.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Macquarrie: This is abundantly clear, and if it were ever made clear it was revealed by the non-answer which the minister gave to the very precise question directed by the venerable member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles), the chancellor of a certain institution.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): At this time of night we are all venerable.

Mr. Macquarrie: But what is more important—and I say this with all due respect to those who represent the agricultural communities—is that the parliamentary structure itself is under attack. So, it becomes not just a matter of concern for those members who represent the farmers, who represent the constituencies which have heavy dealings with the Canadian Wheat Board, but it becomes a matter of concern for all Canadians and for all of us who represent the Canadian people.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Macquarrie: That is why, Sir, at this atrocious hour, I as a dour Presbyterian, am taking part in this midnight debate. For the last hour or two I have been looking up some authorities from McIlwain and Dicey and even Lang. I have read through a good many of