

*Prairie Grain Advance Payments Act*

ed by this dictator who was prepared to lay down what would be available in cash advances to western farmers even though he was a teacher of law in Montreal and knows absolutely nothing about grain production. Still he could pick from his authorities and from his advisers and determine what was best for Canada on June 2, 1968, and lay down exactly what was to happen in Canada.

The cash advances legislation is an example which I will record in this House of Commons. We will examine the master's words and dictates. On June 2, 1968, in Winnipeg the master dictated that cash advances would be doubled and repayments reduced. He said this before the present minister was even elected, let alone designated as minister in charge of the Wheat Board. This minister would like to portray to western Canada that he alone speaks for the Canadian Wheat Board and has taken under advice the Menzies report in respect of wheat marketing. He would have us believe he had that under advice as far back as October, 1968, and that he did in fact double the amount available under cash advances.

Today, before six o'clock, he told us that a real job was done in this regard and that it assisted the farmers through a difficult period. In fact, he said it was the worst marketing period in Canadian grain history. Let me read, however, the advice he received from the opposition on October 28, 1968, after the cash advances legislation of today was introduced in Bill C-113. I repeat "113" because perhaps it was an unlucky number since the legislation did not last very long. I pointed out that in Winnipeg the Prime Minister enunciated this policy and that the person who was picked from Saskatoon indicated that he carried it out even though he was not the minister in charge of the Wheat Board at the time the policy was initiated.

As recorded at page 2133 of *Hansard* for October 28, 1968, the minister was advised what would happen. At that time I said:

Now, if I may turn my attention more specifically to Bill No. C-113, I may say that back on October 4, which is quite a while ago, I directed a number of criticisms at this measure. However, I am not going to remain rigid or fixed in the positions I took at the resolution stage. On October 4 the minister and I got into a discussion with regard to the availability of cash advances and the ability of the farmer to repay those cash advances. I keep referring to the measure as cash advances, which is the common expression in western Canada, but actually it is the *Prairie Grain Advance Payments Act*.

The interpretation of the act in the past was that a farmer would receive 50 cents on the dollar per bushel of wheat delivered, the other half dollar going to repay the advance under the legislation. On October 4 the Minister without Portfolio, who in effect is an honorary parliamentary secretary to the Minister of Trade and Commerce (Mr. Pepin), said that under the proposed bill farmers would be paid a cash advance of \$1 per bushel, and that the repayment would still be at the rate of 50 per cent of that amount. The minister will correct me if I interpret his remarks wrongly but I think that he said that the farmers would repay at the same 50 per cent rate per bushel delivered under their quota. I and a number of other members of the opposition fail to comprehend how this system would fully repay the cash advance within the year, particularly if the quota remained at a staid and solid six bushels per acre.

Mr. Speaker, history has proven that I and a number of speakers from the opposition parties were right when

[Mr. Horner.]

we said there was no possible way in which cash advances could be repaid by farmers if they obtained all that was available to them. The ultimate question in that regard which might be asked by you, Mr. Speaker, or by any other member is, why take it if you cannot repay it? I have mentioned the date on which the first remarks in this regard were made by the Prime Minister. In his Winnipeg speech, in respect of cash advances he said interest-free loans on farm-stored wheat would be doubled from \$3,000 to \$6,000 and that the rate of the repayment would be reduced. This was on June 2, 1968, before the June 25 election. It is obvious to anyone within the sound of my voice that the Prime Minister made those remarks purely in an effort to entice western farmers to vote for the Liberal party.

**Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** Did they?

**Mr. Horner:** The hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) asks, "Didn't they?"

**Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** I said, "Did they?"

**Mr. Horner:** I am sorry; he said, "Did they?" I would say that 75 per cent of them did not and that the other 25 per cent regret they did.

**An hon. Member:** That isn't time.

• (9:30 p.m.)

**Mr. Horner:** Somebody on the other side of the House said that is not true. I would like to hear that said a little louder.

**Mr. Lang:** It is your usual—a half-truth.

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Horner:** Well, Mr. Speaker, the minister himself, the great man who left the farm when he was 18 years old to study law and promised his father that he would never return again, has become the great adviser on Canadian agriculture. He said that my statement is half true. As I look across at him today I can see that he only half-shaved this morning, but only because he only half-looked in the mirror. He only half-faced himself in the mirror, perhaps because what I said was absolutely true. There is not a farmer in western Canada today who does not hope that an election is called immediately so that they can set the record straight and can prove that they never voted for this government. There is not a man on the other side of the House who can deny this.

I notice that the minister is very quiet in that regard, and I point out that the House leader of the Liberal party is in the chamber at present but he says nothing; he does not say that the Saskatchewan farmers want to vote in favour of this government. Not a word is heard on the other side; there is silence. Even the hecklers have died down. I wonder why. I wrack my brains to determine why. But then I come to the conclusion that perhaps it is because there are four by-elections to be held before May 31 and there is one empty seat in the province of Saskatchewan, so that a by-election may never be called