

The Address—Mr. Johnston

Mr. Gardiner: I am not saying any such thing. I am saying that with that information before the country they still said they wanted the twenty-cent payment.

Mr. Johnston: The minister is trying to imply that those organizations and the members of all parties in this house knew very well that the money would be borrowed. It is a mistake to get up in this house and say one thing one day and then contradict it the next, because the record is here.

Mr. Knowles: The minister did not tell them that in the speech he made over the radio and which he read today.

Mr. Johnston: He did not tell them that in the election. Is it any wonder that they voted for him? They were hypnotized by his great oratory. I turn now to page 2114 of *Hansard* of March 11, 1948, which is a little before June 27, where I find the hon. member for Provencher (Mr. Jutras) is speaking. The hon. member for Provencher had quoted some of the things which I have quoted here today. Let there be no misunderstanding about every party in this house being of the opinion that the money which was about to be paid out on that twenty-cent payment was cash in hand.

Mr. Gardiner: What is the date again?

Mr. Johnston: This is March 11, 1948.

Mr. Gardiner: That is the payment that was made on the first three crops and it has nothing to do with the payment we are discussing. That payment was made in the middle of the summer on the crops for 1945, 1946 and 1947. What the hon. member is presuming to discuss now is the next year's payment.

Mr. Knowles: The payment was made just before the election.

Mr. Gardiner: This is the year before the election.

Mr. Johnston: This is the payment the minister was talking about the other day. Here is what the hon. member for Provencher said on that occasion:

That is exactly the position now; and I think it should be made clear to all members that when they vote this amount they are not voting public money. I am referring to the initial price. From remarks made to me from time to time, I know this is a misconception common to many members. One cannot blame them, because they are told they have to vote for a certain amount of money to be paid to the western farmers when, in actual fact, they are only giving power to the Canadian wheat board to pay out another few cents, or some specific sum of money, which belongs to the farmers.

There was no misunderstanding about that when one of the Liberal members was speaking in this house.

[Mr. Johnston.]

Mr. Heiland: Are the farmers kicking?

Mr. Johnston: They are kicking when they have to pay millions of dollars in interest, to be bribed for voting for the Liberals.

Mr. Heiland: They are well satisfied.

Mr. Johnston: Let me go now to another part of the house. I quote now from page 2189 of *Hansard* where a member of another party—

Mr. Gardiner: The hon. member will not find anything there to prove what he is trying to prove, so I shall go out and read my *Hansard*.

Mr. Hansell: Exit the expert.

Mr. Johnston: The hon. member for Lake Centre (Mr. Diefenbaker) was speaking on this matter and he evidently had the same impression when he said:

The payment per bushel is not an additional amount per bushel payable to the farmer as an initial price. It is, in fact, a redistribution out of the participation account. The government knows how much it will pay; \$230 million, I believe, is the amount that it now holds to the credit of the Canadian farmer.

The exact amount was \$213 million, according to the board report, so I am speaking about exactly the same thing. Then the minister interrupted to say:

Everyone but the hon. member for Lake Centre always knew those facts.

Always knew what facts? That the \$213 million which was about to be paid out was cash in hand. Yet the minister tries to tell us that everyone in the country knew that this money was to be borrowed. I take still another portion of the house and quote from page 2191 of *Hansard* of 1948 where the hon. member for Battle River (Mr. Fair) is reported as follows:

Let nobody make the mistake that the farmers are getting money from the treasury of Canada, because this money belongs to the farmers of the prairie provinces, as well as many millions of dollars that are not in the fund at the present time. In many cases farmers are still paying interest on their debts which should have been discharged with these belated payments on their wheat.

Then I should like to quote from page 2183 of *Hansard* where the member of another party, the hon. member for Melfort (Mr. Wright), is reported as follows:

With the amount that is available for this payment—and I believe it is \$234 million—I think a fairly substantial payment could be made . . .

There was no misunderstanding in any part of this house that the money which was to be paid was cash in hand. We only found out what the true situation was when the wheat board report was tabled in the house. We were assured by the Minister of Trade