

*Withholding of Grain Payments*

should assume the responsibility of discussing a bill and attempting to move amendments that are likely to improve it. The first duty of an opposition member, like that of any hon. member, is to have no hesitation in supporting a sensible bill, as we must all have guts enough to oppose a senseless bill.

In my opinion, Bill C-244 was acceptable, since it aimed at correcting some weaknesses in Bill C-239. The government not only was making a commendable effort, but also was showing enough goodwill toward the farmers of western Canada. However, for the reasons I have already mentioned and which especially the opposition members know better than I, there was opposition to passage this bill and, today, some hon. members are happy about it. In fact, they are bent on blaming the government, which they charge with not having in due course made the payments owing to the farmers, thus indulging in petty politics and in the meantime telling the farmers that the government is refusing to pay the amounts they are entitled to.

Mr. Speaker, I feel bound to take part in this debate in order to ask hon. members for the tenth time, or the fifteenth time, perhaps, to be a little more practical, a little more honest. If some want to play politics in order to fight the government, that is possible since our present system allows it. However, I believe it is important that the farmers of this country be well aware of the position taken by some hon. members. I would not say that the majority of the hon. members are dishonest with respect to their constituents, but I consider most important for the farmers to know that some hon. members tried in committee to interfere with the government for the sole pleasure of inconveniencing it, as usual, of course, I must say, in all honesty, that when the government members sat in the opposition, they probably made the same mistake. However, this is no reason to say that when the members of this government were sitting in the opposition they were resorting to that practice. This attitude that I have been rejecting for a long time, even before entering politics, is a great source of disappointment to me.

Tonight, I hear comments about principles, liberty, injustice, but perhaps we forget to ask ourselves if we really play the part we should as opposition members. I know how disappointed the population would feel if they were more aware of the attitude of certain members who make fun out of politics when millions are at stake and the producers in need are waiting for those millions.

I am under the clear impression that the government is prepared to pay those producers. If only the members of the opposition were open-minded enough to accept that a limited period of time be set for third reading of this bill; I am convinced that the government would be prepared within 24 hours to pay the farmers who happen to be the constituents of several members who today harshly reprimand the government. Let us be honest about our responsibilities.

It has been said a while ago that this is a tragedy. The tragedy does not arise from the fact that the government has not yet paid those producers. I think that the govern-

ment is prepared to pass Bill C-244 without any delay, even if they have to bring in certain improvements. The tragedy is that within these very walls there is too much politics going on, and that is the sad side of the story. All members should be objective and not resort to petty politics for we know very well that it is the people of Canada who will be paying for this.

I urge hon. members to be more conscientious in carrying out their responsibilities. I believe the Canadian people have lost confidence in politicians because of some petty politicians who produce all kinds of arguments, too often forgetting their primary responsibilities.

I could wish Canadians to be better informed of debates taking place in this House, which would lead them to invite their representatives to be more objective and to carry out more fruitful work.

The tragedy is not that the government has not paid the money, because it proved that it wanted to do so. I bring up that argument, not to save the face of the government—I recognize it must pay it and that the matter is urgent—but because it can only do so with better co-operation from the members of the opposition. I feel the government is justified in claiming it did not have that co-operation, and I would ask the members of the opposition, those who really want to prove their integrity toward their electors, to tell the government that they are willing to accept a limited debate that those payments might be made as soon as possible. I am convinced the government will then act quickly, in the interest of the producers.

● (11:50 p.m.)

Mr. Speaker, the tragedy is surely not the one which was described a while ago. In conclusion, I would invite the hon. members opposite to show such objectivity. As for those who quoted Standing Order 75C, which I call the muzzle of the House, I would say to them that if the government had imposed closure during the debate in committee, I clearly feel that the members who objected to the bill would have deserved it. I am one of those who believe, that is I have for the past two years, that debate in the House should be restricted since the system enables the opposition—that has always been so—to go too far and then the Canadian people must pay for it.

It is urgent for hon. members to consider this matter and accept the limitation of debates, which would allow them to express themselves sufficiently, while allowing the government to act faster, and taking into account the interests of society. Consequently, we must not prolong debates, take advantage of the system to embarrass the government for the sake of it, but serve our constituents in an objective manner. When one considers the waste of time resulting from these sterile debates such as that of tonight and those which have been taking place for the past three years, that is since I have taken my seat in this House, it will be agreed that all the reasons that I am bringing out make me believe more and more that the limitation of debates must be initiated, that a well ordered legislative program must be introduced at the beginning of each session, so that we know that a debate

[Mr. La Salle.]