

startling unemployment figures and a shocking increase in the cost of living, unemployment figures in reference to the situation that existed in August before the impact of the American surtax, and an increase in the cost of living amounting to 3.6 per cent, the largest increase we have seen during the whole period of increasing inflation in this country. This was also an increase that occurred before the impact of the American surcharge began to be felt on the Canadian economy.

The most tragic aspect of all is that the group most seriously affected by the chronic unemployment figure of 6.5 per cent is composed of the young people of Canada aged 14 to 25 years. What the minister is trying to do is perpetuate a myth. It is a myth that has been sold by what has been referred to as "Trudeaumania".

Mr. Woolliams: The just society.

Mr. Dinsdale: The just society, or participatory democracy. Talking about participatory democracy, as I look over at the government side of the House tonight, I see that we have only three members of the government participating in this important debate.

An hon. Member: Not a member of the cabinet.

Mr. Dinsdale: The hon. minister is behind the curtain and I can well understand his desire to get out from under an embarrassing situation.

Mr. Francis: It gets a little dull after a while.

Mr. Dinsdale: Let me point out, Mr. Speaker, what the government has been trying to do to this and other important matters. I have here a quotation from something said by the late John F. Kennedy.

For the greatest enemy of the truth is very often not the lie—deliberate, contrived and dishonest—but the myth, persistent, persuasive and unrealistic.

That sums up in much better words than I could find, exactly the exercise undertaken by the minister responsible for the Wheat Board in his defence of the indefensible. I can assure the minister that it will not go over with the farmers of western Canada who are deeply concerned about the situation.

Mr. Doug Rowland (Selkirk): Mr. Speaker, we have listened to a lot of words this evening. We have probably listened to so many because it is absolutely impossible for us to discover the words necessary to describe precisely how reprehensible is the government's failure to make to the Canadian Wheat Board the payments it is required to make under the terms of the Temporary Wheat Reserves Act of 1956. The government has told us that it is withholding the 9½ cents a bushel, the \$60 million owing to Canadian farmers, because there is a bill on the order paper which would repeal that provision for the payment of storage and carrying charges contained in the Temporary Wheat Reserves Act. This is money urgently required by a western economy already staggering, not to mention the need of farmers whose income is already marginal.

Withholding of Grain Payments

There is absolutely no justification for the government action, either legal or moral. The government simply does not have a legal leg on which to stand. The Temporary Wheat Reserves Act of 1956 is the law of the land. It requires that certain payments, estimated at approximately \$60 million for the crop year 1970-71 be paid on a monthly basis to the Wheat Board beginning August 1, 1970. The payments have not been made. That is a breach of the law. It is a breach of the law knowingly—and I say knowingly advisedly—undertaken by ministers of the Crown. These are the same ministers of the Crown who paraded their virtue, their respect for the law, their desire for public order and their love of democratic institutions so sanctimoniously during the crisis last October. What is their justification for holding this money, so urgently required by the western economy? Their justification is that there is a bill on the order paper, Bill C-244, which has as one of its provisions the repeal of the Temporary Wheat Reserves Act retroactive to July 31, 1970. This is, I submit, no justification at all. Anyone with even a marginal acquaintance with the procedures of a parliamentary democracy knows that a bill is nothing more than a piece of paper containing some words until Parliament sees fit to enact it into law. Bill C-244 is not yet law, nor can the government assume that it ever will be law. The government must wait until Parliament has made manifest its will. If the government is not willing to take my word for it I should like to cite a passage or two from "The Law of the Constitution" by A. V. Dicey, Tenth Edition. At page "xxxv" appears the statement:

No person or body is recognized by the law of England as having a right to override or set aside the legislation of Parliament.

● (12:50 a.m.)

The same principle applies in our Canadian parliamentary democracy. On page "cx" Dicey says:

—it is fundamental that there must exist some technique for forcing the government to submit to law; if such a technique does not exist, the government itself becomes the means whereby the law is achieved. This is the antithesis of the rule of law.

As I said earlier, the government has no legal leg to stand on in this instance. Indeed, it is the opposition which has the weight of legal opinion behind it and, as may shortly be demonstrated, the weight of legal procedure as well. Even if there is any legal justification for the government's action in withholding \$60 million of badly needed money from the western farmer, we should look at the moral position.

The minister responsible for the Wheat Board is arguing that none of this would have happened if the opposition had let Bill C-244 go through. Indeed, the minister says not only that the government would not now be embarrassed but that the farmer also would have received \$100 million in acreage payments which would more than have replaced the lost revenue represented by the provisions of the Temporary Wheat Reserves Act. In addition, farmers would have received the benefits of an income support program based on gross farm income.