

*Employment Support Bill*

prises relying on the agriculture industry are being seriously affected as well and this will aggravate the problem further but there is no assurance in this bill that it will provide any relief whatsoever in this regard. This is a loosely worded bill and leaves many questions unanswered. Much depends on the regulations and a great deal of power is left in the hands of the minister. We must ask ourselves just who is going to get assistance, how it is going to be given and what assurances there are.

The Temporary Wheat Reserves Act is still law but the ministers of the Crown are not fulfilling their obligations. In my opinion the Minister of Finance (Mr. Benson) is categorically flouting the law. Under this act, the government has a legal obligation to distribute \$61,600,000 for the crop year 1970-71 and the money is not being paid out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund to the Canadian Wheat Board so that the funds can be distributed. In addition, out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund the federal treasury owes to the Canadian Wheat Board the sum of roughly \$26 million for the crop year 1971-72. The majority of these payments should have been made months ago, but instead the government has seen fit to play party politics using the farmers' money as blackmail to force through this House a bill which is entitled the grain stabilization bill but the majority of farmers want no part of it.

If this government is not going to fulfill its obligations under the statutes that have already been approved by Parliament, how can we believe that it will live up to the principle and spirit of this measure? Had the \$61,600,000 been paid to the Canadian Wheat Board, as is provided under the Temporary Wheat Reserves Act, it would have meant a final payment in June of something like nine or nine and a half cents a bushel. In this era of depressed incomes, this would have been very welcome. I suppose that the minister in charge of the Canadian Wheat Board will bring in the bill about November 1, so that he can get a little bit of political mileage in the Assiniboia by-election. He will bring in the bill and say, "we do not want any filibustering now because the farmers out west need this \$100 million". We saw what happened in the last provincial election in Saskatchewan. They tried the same trick but it did not work. I say to you, Mr. Speaker, and to hon. members, this money is due and payable to the farmers of Canada and it should be distributed forthwith. May I call it one o'clock, Mr. Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel):** Order, please. It being one o'clock I do now leave the Chair. The House will meet again at 2 p.m.

At one o'clock the House took recess.

**AFTER RECESS**

The House resumed at 2 p.m.

**Mr. Mazankowski:** Mr. Speaker, prior to the luncheon recess, I was pointing out the public's lack of credibility in the administrative capacity of the government, and the fact that we can no longer place any confidence or trust in what it says or does. This is why I have some reservations about this bill.

I mentioned the Agricultural Stabilization Act, which the Minister of Agriculture referred to when he outlined the position of the government with respect to agriculture.

[Mr. Mazankowski.]

It explicitly states that the board has the power to ensure that the prescribed prices for agricultural products in effect from time to time shall bear a fair relationship to the costs of production of such commodities. As I said before, the prices which the farmer receives for agricultural commodities have decreased relatively disproportionately to the costs of production of those commodities, yet we have seen no positive action taken under the provisions of that act. I simply ask, how are we to believe that positive steps will be taken now under the provisions of the Agricultural Stabilization Act in alleviating the impact of the Surchage.

I also made mention of the fact that the Temporary Wheat Reserves Act, which still remains on the statute books, has been flouted. It has not been lived up to, although it is still in effect. This may directly involve a breach of statutory duties by the Minister of Finance, by the minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board, and by the Minister of Justice (Mr. Turner).

In section 3, the Temporary Wheat Reserves Act explicitly states that the Minister of Finance, out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund, shall pay to the board "an amount equal to the portion of the said stocks that exceeds one hundred and seventy-eight million bushels at the commencement of that crop year—". This was not done. In section 4, it goes on to outline the manner in which these payments are to be made, on a monthly basis. This is not being done. The minister in charge of the Wheat Board has failed to demand that the payments be made. So, as I said before, there is over \$61 million owing for the crop year 1970-71, and \$26 million owing for the crop year 1971-72. Also as I said previously, the minister charged with parliamentary responsibility in respect of the Wheat Board has publicly declared that this sum of money, which is roughly \$90 million, is not going to be paid.

I also believe that the Minister of Justice has violated his statutory duties. He is a member of the Statutory Instruments Revision Commission, and has omitted to include the Temporary Wheat Reserves Act in the Revised Statutes of 1970, something which he was required to do under section 2 of an act respecting the Revised Statutes of Canada.

I am not a lawyer, but I maintain that there is a matter of political blackmail involved in this proposition. The government has seen fit to introduce a bill, the Agricultural Stabilization Act, which includes provision for the rescinding of the Temporary Wheat Reserves Act, but this bill has not yet been enacted. As I said previously, these moneys are due and payable out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund to the Canadian Wheat Board, and they should be distributed through it to the farmers of Canada without further delay.

There is no doubt in my mind that there will be a certain amount of political manipulating in the administration of the bill we are discussing, the same as we have seen with respect to the Temporary Wheat Reserves Act, and this is all happening at a time when the agricultural industry is seriously depressed. The effects of the surtax are only going to compound the issue. As I said before, the agricultural industry is one which is going to be affected to a greater degree than any other industry.