

Withholding of Grain Payments

upon them. From the information which comes across my desk and from the petitions and representations I have seen and heard, the farmers of western Canada do not buy it. They did not buy it at \$100 million, and they sure as hell will not buy it now that \$92 million is owed to them under this account.

The Minister of Justice (Mr. Turner) was here. I do not know what his role is in this matter. However, I believe all honourable men who are responsible for the administration of law—I do not mean only the cabinet ministers but every elected member of this House—should be concerned about this. More than that, all civil servants take an oath to uphold the law. Those responsible senior civil servants also have a responsibility to either see that the law is enforced or resign.

When speaking to a senior civil servant the other day he told me in a jovial manner that they had been giving bad advice. He was not only giving bad advice, he was giving advice that was dishonest, disloyal and illegal. We are not talking about something that happened just a few months ago. Here is a government which not only has not made the payment on this account this year but has not made it for a whole year.

The Minister of Labour (Mr. Mackasey) is sitting here. He probably will be involved because this is a matter which may affect him. There will be an immense amount of unemployment this winter. The Minister of Labour will be faced, one of these days, with the proposition that there is no money in the unemployment insurance fund and he will find that people who have legitimately paid into that fund will ask for money out of it. The minister will have to make up his mind, not later but right then, whether he will ask Parliament to cancel the unemployment insurance scheme and go to another kind of welfare arrangement, or ask that the money from the treasury be paid into the unemployment insurance fund so that he can pay it out and honour the legislation for which he is responsible.

I have no question in my mind about what he would do. He would do just that: he would ask the government for the money, and if it were not forthcoming he would resign. I know it and I believe most members of this House know it. I believe the action of the minister in charge of the Wheat Board represents a dereliction of duty and makes him an immoral person and one whom I do not think is responsible in this Parliament or is a responsible cabinet minister.

Mr. Allen B. Sulatycky (Rocky Mountain): Mr. Speaker, I will not be very long this evening because I know many members wish to participate in this debate. Also, I do not intend to be an apologist for the government. I decided to take part in this debate a few minutes ago and therefore do not have the volume of notes the hon. member for Yukon (Mr. Nielsen) had. They seemed to read as though they were a collaboration of Patrick Walsh, Ron Gostick and Chiang Kai-shek.

Let me say that at this moment the government owes certain money to the Wheat Board but that under the circumstances this fact cannot be taken alone. I submit we cannot look at that fact alone but must look at all the circumstances. If we look at all the circumstances, I submit there are parties in this Parliament who are equally guilty or more guilty than the party in power. Let us go

[Mr. Peters.]

back to last fall when the prairie grain stabilization act was first proposed. It underwent a period of discussion and certain changes were made to it with the approval of many people in western Canada. At that time the intention of the government was well known: it intended to replace that act with an act that would greatly benefit farmers in western Canada.

What I want to know, and what I am sure our friends in the press gallery want to know—because they have not accepted all the phony arguments of my friends to the left—is where were these people at that time? If it was illegal in June for the government to do what it is doing today, why were no motions put in respect of impeachment then? The political positions taken by the opposition are those which are favourable to the Conservative party and the New Democratic party.

Mr. Speaker, I do not propose to make any defence; I just wish to put a few points on the record. The other point I wish to make is that it strikes me that our friends in the opposition are the complainants in what they pretend here is a legal case.

An hon. Member: On behalf of the people of Canada.

Mr. Sulatycky: Fine; on behalf of the people of Canada or on behalf of the Queen—it does not matter on whose behalf they complain. However, they are complaining and they are in the same position as a person who puts a gun to the head of the driver of a car, tells him to drive 100 miles an hour and break the law and then complains about his behaviour.

In May and June the opposition prevented the farmers of western Canada receiving \$100 million, and today they accuse the government of doing this. I submit that for one to be guilty of a crime the intention to break the law is important. I believe it is very clear to all observers in this House, and certainly to the hon. member for Joliette (Mr. La Salle) who is one of the most independent members in the House, that the government intended to benefit the farmers of western Canada and made that intention clear last spring. It intended to pass better legislation early this spring and was prevented doing so by the Conservative party and the NDP. The intention of this government throughout was most honourable. I submit it is the actions of the opposition which are dishonourable in this whole affair.

I wish to make one last comment. They relate to some comments made by the hon. member for Battle River (Mr. Downey) during the extended debate that took place last Thursday evening. He referred to the Minister of Manpower and Immigration (Mr. Lang) and the students of that minister. Since I am in the unique position of being the only person in this House who was a student of this former dean of law of the University of Saskatchewan, I can say I am very proud of it. I was privileged to be one of his students. We who were his students are proud of it. We are proud of him. What we need in this House of Commons is more people like the Minister of Manpower and Immigration and far fewer gutter politicians like those who sit in the opposition.

• (8:30 p.m.)

Mr. A. D. Hales (Wellington): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to say a few words in the debate on this