

The Address—Mr. Hansell

democracy, wherein members at all times, in their speeches and in their votes, would reflect the desires of their constituents, the Minister of National Defence (Mr. Claxton) rose and answered on behalf of the government. While he is Minister of National Defence, he is also an expert on constitutional law. At that time he said, in effect, "Under our system we have responsible government." Well, that is a nice expression; it sounds good. But, I ask: Responsible to whom? That is the question.

The only answer that can be given in a democracy is that they are responsible to the people of the nation. The only place where the people can make their wants and wishes known is on the floor of the House of Commons. That is why each and every member has been elected. We are the people's mouths, whether in criticism or in praise. And when it comes to voicing our opinion and registering our votes, then I declare that this subamendment gives each and every member an opportunity to say unreservedly where they stand in respect of war veterans allowances. Are they in favour of them or are they not?

I know the government will say that in this amendment there is an element of want of confidence, and that members supporting the government cannot be expected to vote for such an amendment. All right; the challenge goes out once again, when I say that the acceptance or rejection of this vote does not mean necessarily support or rejection of a vote of want of confidence. Let some minister rise in his place and say, "On this issue we will permit all members supporting the government to have a free vote, so that we may be able to determine exactly what the people of Canada want. Then, as their servants, we will pursue the policy of giving effect to their wishes".

That is the point I wanted to make. My leader the hon. member for Peace River (Mr. Low) whispers to me now that if the government will bring down an announcement to the effect that at this session, right now, war veterans allowances will be increased as pensions have been—and if that is done before we leave here, in two or three weeks—we shall be happy to withdraw the amendment.

I have one further point to make—and I fear my speech is reaching a sort of anticlimax. However, I cannot take my seat without referring to the apparent plight of the farmers in the west, brought about by the late harvest and the freak seasons we have had throughout the year. We have had rain and snow, and abundant crops, but much of it lies under the snow or is too wet to thresh. Let me add my voice to what has been said by many representatives from

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western Canada, who have said that the government should do something to alleviate this condition. I have taken a trip to the west since the beginning of the session, and while there I had the opportunity to talk with a number of people. I travelled through a considerable portion of Alberta and had an opportunity to discover what the situation was. The condition may have improved somewhat since that time, because I understand the weather has been more favourable. Nevertheless a tremendous amount of crop is still under the snow.

I was pleased to hear the Minister of Trade and Commerce (Mr. Howe) announce a few days ago that the final wheat payment would be made. Perhaps that will help the farmers to some degree, so that they will have a little bit of that jingling stuff in their pockets. Nevertheless they will continue to find themselves in financial difficulties.

I do not wish to repeat suggestions which have been made before. I understand they have been made by the government of Alberta as well as by that of Saskatchewan. They have been made in the house by a number of speakers, when they have asked for the granting of loans on wheat in the bins, or even some sort of assistance in respect of crops that may eventually be harvested, but are not harvested at this time.

I suggest the government should do something about this serious matter.

Let me point out once again, as this group has done year after year, that the government's financial policy is bound within the confines of a framework it has vigorously supported and defended through the years. Almost everything the government has done, almost all financial legislation it has brought down, almost all international agreements touching upon the matter of finance and money, has been designed by the government so as to solidify and make permanent the financial framework from which it refuses to budge, and refuses to change. I am saying once again that just as long as they refuse to change, but pursue the same policies, there can be no improvement. Let it be understood that the same policies that get you into difficulty will never get you out. Once again I say that there will be no permanent solution of the many problems that confront us in the matter of finance, currency, cost of living and what have you until they change some of their basic and fundamental principles which today are false.

(Translation):

Mr. L. D. Crestohl (Cartier): Mr. Speaker, this afternoon I am merely following the policy I have adopted of opening all my