

*Withholding of Grain Payments*

Therefore, it is obvious that our greatest wish is to have an immediate debate in the House on this question so that we may consider the substance of the matter and force the ministers involved to account to Parliament.

Mr. Speaker, the time has come to prove that this Parliament is supreme in our democracy and that this government must yield.

During the last elections, Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister told his electors: Give us a majority so that problems may be solved—

**Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister):** I never said that.

**Mr. Fortin:** Now, they have their majority but they do not make use of it to serve the public but rather to crush Parliament. That is why we want to protest today by supporting the motion of the hon. member for Peace River.

• (3:10 p.m.)

**Mr. Speaker:** I thank hon. members for their comments aimed at assisting the Chair to make a ruling concerning the motion brought forward by the hon. member for Peace River (Mr. Baldwin).

I should refer to the outset to the point just made by the hon. member for Lotbinière (Mr. Fortin). I feel that there might have been some mistake at the basis of his representations to the House and his suggestions to the Chair. He suggests that the motion brought forward by the hon. member for Peace River be considered as a motion on privilege and that, in short, the matter be considered and dealt with by the House as such.

May I remind him that the same suggestion was already made a few days ago and that I was able, on that occasion, to remind the House of the circumstances in which it is possible to initiate a debate on a question of privilege. I made a ruling, and I don't believe I could possibly suggest to the House that the motion before us should be considered as a question of privilege.

[*English*]

The hon. member for Peace River has given the Chair notice of his intention to rise on a point of order today and he indicated that he would propose a motion that was akin to but different in some respects from the motion which now appears on the order paper standing in his name. I listened with great interest to the submissions which were made for the assistance of the Chair by the hon. member for Peace River, by the President of the Privy Council, by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre and, as I said in French a moment ago, by the hon. member for Lotbinière.

I am wondering whether these arguments were helpful in all respects and in every detail for the Chair, because what I have to consider is strictly the procedural aspect. Some of the arguments made to the Chair related perhaps more to the moral issues as to whether there should be a debate on this very important matter and on the duty of the Chair to allow the House the opportunity or to give the House the opportunity to discuss this important matter. With respect, I suggest to hon. members that it is not for the Chair to take this kind of decision. I recognize that the Chair has a responsibility to communicate with represen-

tatives of the parties when it is felt that perhaps it would be helpful for all concerned so that members of this House could have a specific debate. I have taken this initiative in certain instances but, again, with respect, it seems to me that this is not what has to be ruled upon at this time. I have noted the suggestion made by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre, and it will not be overlooked.

This having been said, I return to the strictly procedural aspect of the matter. Hon. members know in what way a motion can be brought before the House for consideration. There is really no purpose to be served by my going again into this question. It is well known to hon. members. It is suggested at this time by the hon. member for Peace River that there is another way, which is not too familiar to me and to some other hon. members, of bringing a matter forward for immediate consideration by the House that is over and beyond the Standing Orders that guide our proceedings and perhaps over and beyond the customs and usages of our own Parliament.

The hon. member is endeavouring to institute what might be described as an historical proceeding to impeach a minister or ministers of the Crown. This is, I gather, common to both motions now before us. The first motion is well known to the Chair because it appears on the order paper. It has been there for a few days and this has given me the advantage of being able to look at precedents and consider the matter, as I have already said in the House. The second motion is new to the Chair, but I have listened to the hon. member explaining it and referring to it and I gather that essentially it is the same as the one on the order paper.

It seems that the hon. gentleman has in the main called as his witnesses a number of early British authors and precedents. Implicit in his submission is the suggestion that the practice outlined by his authorities has been carried into and forms part of our own Canadian parliamentary procedure. The hon. gentleman relies in the main for his support on the provisions of our Standing Order 1 which, in a form a bit different from its present wording, was enacted in 1867. It might not be necessary for me to quote it since the hon. member has already referred to the substance of Standing Order 1, but I will read it in any event in case it might be helpful:

In all cases not provided for hereafter or by sessional or other orders, the usages and customs of the House of Commons of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland as in force at the time shall be followed so far as they may be applicable to this House.

This, perhaps, is where I have some difficulty, because it must be determined whether these usages and customs which were in force in the British Parliament in 1867 and which we have formally imported into our proceedings by virtue of Standing Order 1 are applicable in this particular instance to our own constitutional system and to our own procedures. It may be that a residue of the unusual and unused impeachment proceedings may still lie in the British Parliament, but even there, as hon. members know, such a proceeding was last invoked a long time ago. I believe there is authority for the fact that the last time impeachment was actually used and effected in the British Parliament was in 1805.