

Withholding of Grain Payments

except it means we have to increase production to a great extent. I am using the actual figure over a 15-year past average and it comes out to about \$29 million.

Mr. Lang: Forty million dollars.

Mr. Peters: I don't believe it comes to \$40 million. That is the high end. In any case, if we were to triple production in western Canada, we would be raising the total figure. The argument in the committee was always in relation to the last 15 years of production. I believe this is the context in which the \$40 million was mentioned. There is nothing this House can do to force the minister and the government to live up to the law, I know of no way or technique to accomplish this.

A debate such as this is a means of letting off steam, but it does not come to a conclusion because we do not vote. I hope the minister has listened to the arguments, all of which have been sincere. Surely he has come to the conclusion that ministers of the Crown must live up to the law and that he as the minister responsible for the Wheat Board must obey and uphold these laws.

I am sure that members of the Standing Committee on Agriculture are prepared to consider the stabilization bill with a view to developing stability of farm income in western Canada. In this way there will be no threat in respect of the use of the \$100 million. Surely this Parliament can do no more than make such an appeal to ministers of the Crown. If it were necessary to have an election every time the opposition or people in the country felt the Crown had not lived up to its responsibilities, we would find ourselves in a very serious position. We have always had very outstanding parliamentarians in this country. We have had very few reasons either here or in England to institute impeachment proceedings. That has taken place very rarely in the United Kingdom and to my knowledge has never taken place here. It is a piece of legislation we have not used and will not use in the foreseeable future. Whether democracy will continue to function and whether the law will be observed by ministers of the Crown depends entirely on the ministers who respect the wishes of this country.

[Translation]

Mr. Roch La Salle (Joliette): Mr. Speaker, may I put a question to the hon. member?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel): Order. The hon. member knows that under the Standing Order he can put a question only with the hon. member's consent.

Mr. Peters: Yes, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel): The hon. member for Joliette.

Mr. La Salle: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Courtesy demands, I believe, that I put a question to the hon. member, since he put one to me.

Later today I intend to present a motion for adoption of the motion for third reading of the bill within a time limit, for the benefit of western producers. I would therefore ask the hon. member whether he is prepared to support the motion I intend to present.

[Mr. Peters.]

[English]

Mr. Peters: No, Mr. Speaker. Any type of agreement would require hon. members justifying what the minister has done. If we were to ask now for co-operation or agreement in respect of Bill C-244, we would in effect be saying that what the minister suggests is correct and that when this bill is passed, whatever he has done is legitimate. Most members have agreed that in respect of the Temporary Wheat Reserves Act the House of Commons has supported it, the Senate has supported it and it has received royal assent.

I would be prepared to accept the \$100 million proposition, but once the obligation of the government has been met we should bring forward the stabilization bill and consider it separately as a method of guaranteeing the stability of farm income rather than as a partial method for the fulfilment of the purposes of the Temporary Wheat Reserves Act and economic stabilization.

● (1:50 a.m.)

Mr. John Lundrigan (Gander-Twillingate): Mr. Speaker, I stand in my place at one hour and fifty minutes past the hour of midnight with mixed feelings. I have a sad feeling because we have to debate this type of issue in a country that prides itself on its democratic system. But I am proud that we have on the opposition side of the house a number of members who have been willing, after a hard day's work, to stay here until almost 2 a.m. to debate an issue that will go down in Canadian history as a major event in the protection of the rights of the Canadian people.

We have heard from across the way tonight a variety of members. On one occasion we heard the "grey eminence" of the Liberal party who sat there lonely in his seat, at one time the only member of that party in the House. Then we had an attempt, which the whip of the Liberal party will want to deny, to reduce the House below the level of a quorum when several members were behind the curtain, in order to try to show us up as a group of individuals who were not prepared to carry on the debate. This occurred several hours earlier. I am proud to be able to stand here with at least a solid quorum of members of the opposition who have carried on this debate and will do so until every last word has been said.

This is the second time I have taken part in a debate past midnight in this House. Last time I was here until a quarter to one. That was in the fall of 1970 in a debate on what is now referred to as the October crisis, when the War Measures Act was invoked. Having listened to that debate on the Saturday, into the Saturday night and early Sunday morning, I can say that I do not know whether I felt sadder then than I do now.

This issue is not one of wheat. Wheat has been mentioned hundreds of times this evening, and I have seen the leadership shown by the hon. member from Calgary and listened to the speech of my colleague to my left, from Vegreville (Mr. Mazankowski). Other hon. members have also made outstanding speeches. These members were not talking about wheat. I do not think you will get members from Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia or