

Withholding of Grain Payments

the members of the opposition for the farmers they represent. I think this is a very important point to make. The members who are objecting to the bill are the very ones who represent the farmers. I have been a member of the agriculture committee for some months and recall that when Bill C-176 was first introduced members of the opposition said, "Let us travel around the country and we will pass the bill".

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Robinson: We have all heard of "Have gun, will travel". Well, we travelled and it cost the taxpayers of this country a lot of money.

Mr. Horner: A point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel): Order, please. The hon. member for Crowfoot (Mr. Horner) is rising on a point of order.

Mr. Horner: I wonder whether Your Honour would call to the hon. member's attention the fact that he should be relevant to the subject under debate.

Mr. Robinson: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Crowfoot (Mr. Horner) talks about being relevant. Let me just suggest to him what the facts are. On many occasions in the agriculture committee I was required to stand on a point of order and point out that the hon. member for Crowfoot, who I am sure will recall this, the hon. member for Mackenzie (Mr. Korchinski) and other opposition members were being irrelevant, repetitive and not material to the issue. That is exactly what the position was. They filibustered the bill all through the committee, and even now the bill has not been passed. If they have their way, it never will pass and the only people who will suffer will be the farmers.

Mr. Paproski: That is not true.

Mr. Robinson: I heard the hon. member for Mackenzie say, "Pay out the money and we will pass the bill". I am wondering to what extent we can believe what they say on the opposition side. I am wondering to what extent we can believe what the hon. member's party says. We know what they said and did with regard to Bill C-276, and we have no reason to think they will do otherwise with this bill. They just do not want to help the farmers, and that is all.

Mr. Horner: A lot you know about the farmers.

Mr. Robinson: I have listened to the hon. member for Saskatoon-Biggar (Mr. Gleave), the hon. member for Crowfoot, the hon. member for Mackenzie and many other big, fat-cat farmers and wondered just who they represent. Who is it who gains the most from this bill? I suggest to the opposition and their fat-cat farmers that the people who gain most from the first bill are the little farmers, and that is why they do not want to pass it; they will not get much out of it. I suggest that these big, fat-cat farmers should try to help the little farmer instead of helping themselves, as they are trying to do at the present time.

Mr. Forrestall: Call him to order.

Mr. Robinson: The other day I heard the minister in charge of the Wheat Board (Mr. Lang) make an impassioned plea and he buttressed his remarks by saying that, if necessary, he would go to jail for the farmers. I think many of us feel the same way. If necessary, I would be prepared to go to jail for the farmers too. I think the farmers need help and we on the government side want to help them. So to the opposition I say, "For heaven's sake, why won't you help the farmers?"

Mr. Rod Thomson (Battleford-Kindersley): Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Forrestall: Now we are going to listen to a farmer for a few minutes.

Mr. Peters: To a big, fat farmer.

Mr. Thomson: Mr. Speaker, we have listened to the hon. member for Toronto-Lakeshore (Mr. Robinson) and others talk about the value of things the farmers need, about the value of Bill C-244 and what it would do for the farmers. I am a farmer, and it seems odd to me that we have a former dean of law drawing up plans for farmers. But I am only a farmer. If I were a dean of law I think I would use as a classic case, when teaching a group of students in class, Bill C-244, one of the bills introduced by the government to break its own laws. I can see law classes of the future being told just that.

I do not want to talk about the law. I should like to talk for a moment about the motion before the House and talk as a farmer because I know a little about farming. I feel somewhat sorry for the minister over this bill. He reminds me of the United States President who finds himself caught up in the war in Viet Nam. He cannot win, he cannot afford to lose and he does not know how to get out of the situation. The minister has been unable to sell this bill, or the conditions that go along with it, to farmers or farm organizations. Let me read what one farm organization had to say to emphasize this point. The Federation of Agriculture said in its brief:

The "transitional" payment must be made immediately and not be made conditional either upon acceptance of the rest of the bill as it stands or upon its rapid passage.

Aside from the "transitional" payment, the bill is not acceptable as it now stands.

If the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Olson) is able to tell me which farm organizations accept the provisions of Bill C-244 and some of the conditions laid down therein—apart from the \$100 million payment—I should like him to give me chapter and verse what they say. He made a speech this evening but did not name one organization that supported the bill. If the minister in charge of the Wheat Board (Mr. Lang) could tell me which farm organization accepted and endorsed the principle of Bill C-244 and its conditions, then I would be happy to hear him. In fact, I would be quite happy to give him some of my time.

I sat in the Committee on Agriculture and heard the testimony given by various farm organizations, such as the Federation of Agriculture, the wheat pools, the National Farmers Union and others. I should like the minister to point out to me which of these organizations accept the conditions laid down in Bill C-244.

Mr. Lang: Mr. Speaker—