

Mr. Arnold Peters (Timiskaming): Mr. Speaker, I do not intend to delay the House. I have enjoyed listening to the speeches which have been made. Much interest in democracy has been shown by many hon. members. I personally participated in what the minister called a filibuster. I was one of those who believed that the legislation was poor and could be improved. I was one of those who advocated the splitting into two parts of that piece of legislation. On the one hand there was the money that was to be paid on July 31 for storage payments; on the other hand, and separate from that measure, there was the other proposition. The government was not too clear about it; it changed its mind a number of times last year. I am talking about the legislation that came out of the task force that the government set up.

The task force report was augmented by discussions which took place with farm groups as to what percentage the farmer should pay and the government should pay in arriving at a formula respecting the stabilization of income. I make no apology for using Parliamentary methods of supporting these two things. I might suggest that there was a great deal of chance in this. I assured my colleagues I would hold the fort while they went out and fought the election in Saskatchewan. I did not think that I would get so much help from the situation that developed. I took advantage of the situation mentioned earlier. I said to my House leader that we have now changed the bill and that the government has to make this payment on July 31 because that is the law. I said that when we reassemble, we will face a new stabilization bill which will only involve itself with the stabilization of agricultural income. I did not expect there would be a way to circumvent this.

The minister can accuse me of being devious or using all types of strategy to accomplish my end, but I usually look in the book and see whether it is legitimate before I do it. I was playing the rules. I think that I accomplished exactly what I set out to do, namely to support these two parts of the bill. The minister has done something which I do not consider to be playing the ballgame. He changed the rules. In my opinion, he does not have the right to change the rules. I depended on the law being supreme. The minister says the bill is going to pass anyway. I am not sure that is true, Mr. Speaker.

I do not come from western Canada, but I received 3,000 letters from westerners asking that this bill be killed. I may find some way to help do that and the bill will not be passed. If the bill does not pass by Christmas, will the minister then let the law apply? Will he then pay the \$60 million plus the \$29 million that will be involved? If he does not, we will find a way. Is this going to be done at the time of the election? Do we have to participate in a donnybrook to handle that situation? There must be some way that the law can be made effective. If the minister changes the rules, he cannot blame me for changing the rules in whatever ways appear to be appropriate and taking advantage of situations that may develop. At least this is playing the ballgame as it is laid out by our Parliamentary practice and tradition.

Withholding of Grain Payments

I think the payment has to be made. I do not believe you can retroactively decide something. The minister has a legal and moral obligation to make that payment. If it means there is only \$40 million in the stabilization fund, we should talk about that. I do not think \$40 million is going to settle the problem in so far as the farmers are concerned. I think the farmers have already spent the nine cents or 10 cents a bushel they expected to receive as a rebate for the storage costs. If they have to pay that nine cents or 10 cents per bushel, they are going to demand it in another form.

The minister can save himself, the government and Parliament a lot of trouble. If he does not honour the law, we are probably going to circumvent his intention anyway. The minister certainly knows and understands the law. I am sure he has a great deal of moral conviction. I am sure he is very upset about what has happened in the past three days. I honestly cannot understand his reason for not making the payment to the Wheat Board, taking whatever money is left and asking the committee to look at the stabilization factor that all members and farm organizations want to have. However, the minister does not care.

● (1:40 a.m.)

The farmer says he will have to pay the 2 per cent out of his net and the government will pay the 4 per cent. His percentage will be calculated on his gross, but he will have to pay out of the net. That will make his net income so much less. Originally, the argument did not involve the figures two and four, but another set of figures. It is possible that some arrangement can be made but I honestly believe the minister will do something for himself, something for his government and something for this Parliament. I do not know how else the minister can be forced into it if he does not want to be. The Liberals have a great tendency to fall back on the proposition that they have a large majority and can do what they like. In another country, in the United States, for example, this matter would be determined by a simple recourse to the Supreme Court. But in Canada I am sure no one could refer this to the Supreme Court and hope for any satisfaction, because a Supreme Court Judge would say: Parliament is supreme and parliament will have to do it. If Parliament does not have the machinery to enforce the operation of the law, I suggest we are in extreme difficulty.

I have listened to the arguments of the minister. I have listened to the arguments put forward in committee. I really cannot see the advantage, either from the minister's point of view in a political sense or from the viewpoint of the amount of money the farmer will get, of flouting the law and maintaining that the \$100 million is to be kept as a set figure as against paying the money under the present law and using whatever balance there may be to institute a reform of the income structure of western Canada by in some way guaranteeing a minimum income over a period of time. It may take some \$40 million. The minister indicated that I was wrong in saying the amount could be over \$40 million. The minister said it could be a lot more. He is probably right,