

Withholding of Grain Payments

self from the scene. Mr. Speaker, he is part and parcel of this situation and he has to take his share of the responsibility.

I feel sorry for the members of the Wheat Board because there is not enough strength in the cabinet to demand fair and equal treatment for all parts of Canada. The Minister of Agriculture is finished. They have no respect for him in Western Canada because they cannot believe his word any more, and once a man's word is no good he is no good himself. I still have faith in the Minister of Supply and Services (Mr. Richardson) and in the minister responsible for the Wheat Board (Mr. Lang). They are fighting. But they must have help, and if the Minister of Justice, as a prospective leader of his party, does not help now, his silence will be well remembered in western Canada when he starts his campaigning. He ought not to think that just because he attended university and danced with Princess Margaret in Vancouver this will get him much support in western Canada. He must get up and defend the law. He ought to get up and force this government into obeying the law.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel): Order. In the opinion of the Chair, the noise in the chamber has increased while the hon. member has been speaking. We are talking about law and order and respect for the law. I wonder if we could have a little respect for the rules of this House and for the rules of order and relevancy.

Mr. Horner: I thought I had the attention of the House and I do not for one moment believe I was not paying attention to the rules. I did not complain about a certain amount of heckling.

Mr. Mahoney: Holy, holy, holy.

Mr. Horner: The hon. member for Calgary South (Mr. Mahoney) is making remarks again. In my opinion this is the most serious debate upon which the House has entered. The Canadian Wheat Board has long been upheld as an independent body serving the farmers. The minister in charge of the Wheat Board did something the like of which I have never seen done, even in the days of Jimmy Gardiner.

The Wheat Board, undoubtedly with the minister's approval, sent out a notice to every farmer telling them how much money they would receive under the government's proposals according to the acreage on their books, if the bill passed through Parliament. This was a deliberate use for political purposes of a body which has long been upheld as a farmers' body. In fact it was never that. The appointments were always political and there are no farmers on it. Charlie Gibbings is one, if you like, but he is not, in my eyes, any more. He has been working for advancement. He was very disappointed that he did not get the chairmanship, and I suppose he still wants it.

In any case, this is a glaring example of abuse. The Wheat Board has been made use of and in my opinion, as well as in the opinion of many farmers, the board will never regain the statute it previously enjoyed in western Canada. Its machinery, its mailing services, its knowledge of farm acreage were all used for political purposes involving the passage of a particular piece of legislation. This is one more aspect of the efforts of the Liberal party

[Mr. Horner.]

to hold power by any means. Power is what the Liberal party seeks and its supporters will stop at nothing to get power and maintain it.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel): Order. I regret to interrupt the hon. member, but the time allotted to him has expired.

Mr. Kenneth Robinson (Toronto-Lakeshore): Mr. Speaker, I must say that the hon. member for Crowfoot (Mr. Horner) is a tough act to follow, but I will do the best I can in the circumstances. I really did not expect to speak in this debate and I might not have done so had it not been for the attitude taken by the news media, which is that the government is not really interested in the farmers. Let me assure the news media that this is not the case. We are just as concerned for the farmers as anyone else in the House.

As I understand the stabilization bill, its primary objective is to stabilize the flow of cash receipts in the prairie provinces from the six major grains by establishing a fund, sustained by contributions from the federal government and grain producers, from which payments will be made to producers in years when cash receipts fall below an average based on the cash receipts for the previous five years.

The Temporary Wheat Reserves Act, which the government proposes to repeal, applies only to wheat. What were the reasons for bringing in Bill C-244? Prairie grain farmers have historically been subject to sharp and substantial swings in the level of cash receipts from grains. Receipts from the six major grains have varied from \$377 million in 1945-46 to \$1,353 million in 1966-67. Severe liquidity crises arise from the combination of high investment inventory and low cash receipts. These affect not only the producers but many other major sectors of the Canadian economy. Basic market factors outside Canadian control have been the major cause of this instability in the past. Coupled with this has been the fact that Canadian producers are competing with heavily subsidized producers in other countries.

Unless action is taken to counteract these factors the Canadian grain industry will not be in a position to compete in world markets. Thus, the multi-million dollar Canadian grain industry and, in particular, the producers, will continue to be subject to the severe effects of market swings upon stocks and income. What could be more clear as to why we need such a bill?

We have heard a lot about the legal position. To me it appears that the intent and purpose is the important thing. The purpose has not changed and the intent has not changed. Believe me, the money will be paid to the farmers as soon as the opposition ends its filibuster and agrees to let the bill go through. We on the government side want to help the farmers and I ask members of the opposition; "Why don't you?" The issue is not the question of legal or illegal acts on the part of the government; it is a question of providing the farmers the help they need.

Mr. Alexander: If the shoe fits, steal it.

• (9:20 p.m.)

Mr. Robinson: I have listened to a filibuster by the opposition for a long time and have witnessed the delay this has caused. I have observed the apparent disregard of