

Prairie Grain Stabilization Act

refused to pay the 9½ cents a bushel owed to farmers for last year. When you couple that with the amount that has been owing since then, the government owes the farmer in the neighbourhood of 15 cents per bushel. That amount should have been paid to our farmers up to the present. The government is not supporting wheat at \$1.95½ a bushel; it is not supporting it at all.

It is regrettable that the government has not introduced the agricultural policy which the hon. member said was so badly needed. In the same speech he praised the appointment of a minister who would have sole jurisdiction over the Wheat Board. He said that he knew the minister would give the Board his undivided assistance and attention. Since then the position has degenerated. He no longer devotes his undivided attention to matters involving Canadian wheat; he must devote part of his attention to his duties as Minister of Manpower and Immigration. The late hon. member for Assiniboia would be disappointed if he saw the present situation. Perhaps it is better that he does not know about it.

I now wish to say a few words about the grain stabilization program. May I say, before commencing my main remarks on the motions, that if the government had paid what it owes the farmers under the Temporary Wheat Reserves Act I would have been quite prepared to vote against the motion that was brought in this afternoon. We cannot ignore the government's disobedience of the law. We should not permit the government to go on its merry way and disregard the law. With that consideration in mind I was motivated to support the motion.

The minister in charge of the Wheat Board represents the constituency of Saskatoon-Humboldt.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. I was under the impression that the hon. member indicated a few moments ago that he was about to direct his remarks to the two motions which are before the House for debate. I think, with respect, that the hon. member should confine himself to that subject. We are now at the report stage of Bill C-244 and I suggest that hon. members should try to deal with motions that are before the House for debate.

Mr. Horner: Mr. Speaker, I heartily agree with you. I did not think I was straying from the motions. The first motion deals with an amendment to clause 2. Its effect would be that a farmer's income would be compiled on the basis of the net income of the farmer rather than on gross sales. I wholeheartedly support that concept. Today we find the farmer, to use that old, shopworn expression, caught in the cost-price squeeze as never before. Why do I say "as never before"? Wheat prices in the last year or so have gone down, yet the costs the farmer must pay have gone up. They will go up, particularly after the government brings in its new tax measure which will impose a capital gains tax on machinery, and so on. The farmer's costs are going up, yet the price he receives for his wheat is going down; consequently, he is caught in the cost-price squeeze as never before.

That is why I wholeheartedly support this amendment. After all, we are trying to stabilize the farmer's income and bring about the greatest possible security of income for people engaged in farming. To my way of thinking, if the government really wants to stabilize the farmer's

[Mr. Horner.]

income it should do so on the basis of net income rather than of gross sales.

The minister in charge of the Canadian Wheat Board (Mr. Lang) is from Saskatoon. Nevertheless, we must ask, whom is he serving? Is he serving the farmers of Saskatchewan or the government of Canada? One could say that he is serving both. In that regard it may be interesting to recall the comments made on June 2, 1968, when the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) outlined in Winnipeg the agricultural policy of the Liberal Party. He is reported as having said:

One of the most pressing long-range problems for western farmers is the need for an adequate yearly income, to get away from the boom and bust cycle that has become part of prairie farm life. To this end, the Liberals are proposing a plan, which, in effect, sounds like the equivalent of unemployment insurance for farmers. In good years they would pay into a fund; in bad years they would draw money from the fund, thereby, to a degree, stabilizing their income.

Those words do not refer to net or gross income. I like to think they refer to net income. However, as we look at the legislation, which it is claimed expresses the concepts enunciated on June 2 in Winnipeg, we can readily see that it has been dreamed up by the civil service and the Prime Minister's establishment, and not by the farmers.

May I call it six o'clock, Mr. Speaker?

At six o'clock the House took recess.

AFTER RECESS

The House resumed at 8 p.m.

Mr. Horner: Mr. Speaker, before the supper hour I was talking about the dreams and aspirations of the late hon. member for Assiniboia and his concept of what an agricultural policy for Canada should envisage. As recorded at page 967 of *Hansard* for November 18, 1969, he said that the price of wheat should be supported and that there should be a national agricultural policy.

The government has attempted to establish an agricultural policy based on bureaucratic thinking and the establishment thinking within the PMO, or it might be referred to as the establishment of the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau), which is completely contrary to the position taken by the late hon. member for Assiniboia. This proves to me, a member of the opposition, that one cannot be effective within the government ranks, particularly when the government is comprised of an authoritative, arrogant group of ministers prepared to do what they want and not necessarily what the people want.

The late hon. member expressed the desire that prices of wheat be supported. This government is deliberately bringing in a measure which takes almost 15 cents a bushel from the farmer, taking into consideration the 9.5 cents a bushel that should have been paid out and the portion which should have been paid out since the beginning of the present crop year.

Prior to the supper hour I was pointing out that this policy was envisaged long before the minister in charge of the Canadian Wheat Board was even elected. It was long before he had his present responsibility. I say in his