

Elections and call before it not only the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Whelan), who acted as an innocent bystander in this whole thing, but the Minister of Transport (Mr. Lang) who knows the situation well, then we have to face up to the fact that we cannot let die on the *Hansard* record the question of what happened on that awful day, July 8, 1976.

When I asked the Minister of Agriculture about the burning of the documents, he said, "Well, the police took all they wanted, anything we needed we kept and everything else which was irrelevant or trivial—"insignificant" was his word—was destroyed." I asked him who instructed the burning of these papers. Here is his answer, as reported on page 15157 of *Hansard*:

The information which was given to me was that no instructions were given to the person in charge who decided that all insignificant documents should be destroyed.

So no instructions were given by the Minister of Agriculture to destroy those documents. But somebody down in the office who had fired all the girls, kept the director out of his office, on his own initiative burned all the documents. I would think that with that type of evidence before us we have to face the fact that we are dealing with a serious political situation in the west. We know the close tie-up between the major newspapers in Saskatchewan and this political machine. And just last week we saw more evidence of it. A minister of the Crown, knowing that all these things are riding forward and will maybe come to light one of these days, suddenly issued a warning to two newspapers: "You publish or distribute that particular document and my lawyers will have words to say to you." And these two docile papers agreed not to distribute the document. But that same warning was not thrust on every other newspaper in Canada—because they are not part of the machine in Saskatchewan.

We are fighting a messy situation out there, Mr. Speaker. We ask the government and parliament to back us in cleaning it up. That is all we are asking. It is a serious matter, and I do not want to see it resting on the conscience of this parliament that we will not face up to it but prefer to follow the technical explanation that the documents cannot be given because to do so would destroy the relationship between the police and the minister. That is not good enough.

I could go on and develop the various arguments I have raised in these last minutes. But I think I have made my case as well as I can. We do have some responsibility to our country and to the legal system. Also we have responsibility to see that justice is done, and in this case, justice is not being done because smart lawyers and teachers of lawyers use superficial legal reasons to avoid justice in this country. Whether it be in the province of Saskatchewan or at the federal government level this must be fought, and I wish to congratulate the hon. member for Red Deer for having the courage to bring it up.

**Mr. Kaplan:** I know that the time of the hon. member for Qu'Appelle-Moose Mountain has expired but I wonder if I might be permitted to ask him a question.

#### *Prairie Farm Assistance Act*

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** As an extension of time was permitted the hon. member, I suppose I can take it upon myself to allow a question.

**Mr. Kaplan:** At the beginning of his remarks, did the hon. member indicate that he already had some or all of the documents whose production he is seeking?

**Mr. Hamilton (Qu'Appelle-Moose Mountain):** I made it clear in my remarks that we know what is contained in the documents. We were the ones who got the Auditor General and the police moving on this. We know that we do not have the official documents on the basis of which we can speak and say that our record is the authentic one. The only way in which a member of parliament can get the official documents is by putting down a motion for the production of papers. We do not have the official documents but, for example, in the case of Saskatchewan they sent us a full transcript of the case. We have something with which to debate. The answer to the hon. member's question, in simple terms, is this: we know what the documents are, and they are no more serious than what we have here. It is not just an isolated case. We know there are other people involved who are not giving evidence and whom we would, naturally, like to attract.

Since some people are doing their duty and giving evidence for the state, others should come forward too to play their part, not by protecting these people with motives which are not proper, but by turning them loose on to the justice system. Let the judges and juries decide whether they are guilty of criminal fraud and not an attorney general nor an ex-minister of justice in a *de facto* sense interfering with our justice system. Even though the amounts are small, just \$300 for a couple of weeks work, the fact is they did that, and had the colossal gall to steal that little bit of money in trust that should go to the farmers.

● (1750)

**Mr. Art Lee (Parliamentary Secretary to Solicitor General):** Mr. Speaker, I listened with great interest to the arguments and allegations put forward by the hon. member for Red Deer (Mr. Towers) and the hon. member for Qu'Appelle-Moose Mountain (Mr. Hamilton). They were alleging a cover-up and evasion, which is a very serious allegation indeed. I found it rather interesting that they could make this charge in view of the fact that it was the attorney general of Saskatchewan who decided to stay the proceedings. The hon. member pointed out in a letter he referred to from the attorney general of Saskatchewan that the reason why the attorney general stayed the proceedings was that the rationale or basis for the commitment to trial was based on the evidence of an accomplice who was involved in allegations of fraud. Surely that matter is properly within the jurisdiction of the attorney general of Saskatchewan.

What the hon. member for Qu'Appelle-Moose Mountain is asking of us I think he should ask of the attorney general of Saskatchewan. He is asking us about cover-up and evasion when it is the attorney general of Saskatchewan who stayed