

# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, September 28, 1971

The House met at 2 p.m.

## HOUSE OF COMMONS

### PRESENCE IN SPEAKER'S GALLERY OF SECRETARY GENERAL OF NATO, MR. MANLIO BROGIO

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. May I bring to the attention of the House the presence in the Speaker's gallery of a distinguished guest of the Canadian Parliament, whose presence here today honours us, Mr. Manlio Brosio, Secretary General of NATO.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear.

[Translation]

On behalf of my colleagues, I extend the most cordial welcome to you, Mr. Secretary General.

[English]

The Secretary General is in Ottawa on the occasion of the seventeenth annual meeting of the North Atlantic Assembly. I am sure hon. members would want me on their behalf to extend a very warm welcome not only to the Secretary General, but also to the President of the Assembly, Mr. Romain Fandel, and to all the eminent parliamentarians who represent with such dignity the national assemblies of the NATO community.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

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## PRIVILEGE

### MR. LEWIS—WITHHOLDING BY GOVERNMENT OF PAYMENTS UNDER TEMPORARY WHEAT RESERVES ACT— FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS

**Mr. David Lewis (York South):** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege which affects all Members of Parliament. I appreciate that the issue to which I want to refer has been before this House on a number of occasions previously. I refer to the failure of the government to make payments under the Temporary Wheat Reserves Act. I appreciate, as I have said, that the matter has been before this House on many previous occasions. There was a question of privilege raised by my colleague, the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles), on September 13. There was a debate under Standing Order 26 on September 16. I know also that the hon. member for Peace River (Mr. Baldwin) tried to bring forward a motion dealing with the impeachment of the relevant ministers of the Crown on September 21, and that there was an opposition day, a debate and a vote on September 23, as well as a number of motions under Standing Order 43 and numerous questions from members of the Official Opposition as

well as from members of the party which I have the honour to lead.

However, Mr. Speaker, my point of privilege arises out of new things that have occurred in the last number of hours. Yesterday during the question period the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau), in answer to a question, stated:

Mr. Speaker, those payments have not been made—

Then, according to press reports, outside the House of Commons he said, and this is reported in quotation marks:

"We admit that the government is in default and we don't want to stay in default much longer," Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau said outside the Commons yesterday.

He warned that the government would pull its new legislation back within "a matter of weeks or days" if it does not get through Parliament.

"If the farmers through their Conservative members say they want \$60 million instead of \$100 million, then fine."

• (2:10 p.m.)

That is what the Prime Minister is reported to have said outside Parliament yesterday, in addition to which the minister responsible for the Wheat Board is out in the west allegedly speaking to farmers on the Prairies and asking them to decide whether payments under the Temporary Wheat Reserves Act are to be made by the government or whether they want to support Bill C-244. The statements by the Prime Minister and by the minister in charge of the Wheat Board in my respectful submission create a new situation which deserves your attention, Mr. Speaker, and the attention of Parliament. What all this adds up to I say to you, Mr. Speaker, to the members of this House and to the people of Canada, is a deliberate and scandalous contempt for the law by this government. The law is being scorned by the government and Parliament is being scoffed at by the government.

The Prime Minister and the minister in charge of the Wheat Board are saying to the people of Canada and Members of Parliament, "we know we are breaking the law; we know we are in default and we intend to continue to be in default until such time as the bill, which we think is a good bill, is passed by this Parliament or until such time as we withdraw that bill for some reason or other and then must obey the law now on the statute books". I suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, it is the duty of the government, as it is of every citizen of Canada, to obey the law as it is, and to obey it not conditionally but to obey it as the law requires.

I also suggest to you that the Prime Minister, the minister in charge of the Wheat Board and the government are distorting the facts to the people of Canada in statements which they are making. The question at issue is no longer whether people are being paid under one act or another act. The question at issue is whether the people of Canada and this Parliament will permit the government to break