

Withholding of Grain Payments

Mr. J. H. Horner (Crowfoot): Mr. Speaker, my first remark is that what I am about to say should not be said by anybody in this House.

An hon. Member: Don't say it, then.

Mr. Horner: The situation has become so deplorable under this government that I feel these words have to be said. I noticed today in a news release which came across my desk that the Minister of Justice (Mr. Turner) has announced a national conference on the law. It is high time.

Mr. Stanfield: It is too late.

Mr. Horner: The Minister of Justice has failed to uphold the law of Canada in more than one instance. He failed to uphold the British North America Act, as a result of which a province was forced to take a case to the Supreme Court. That was the result of a despicable action by a completely despicable government.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Horner: This conference is to be held from February 1 to February 4, 1972.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): It's too late.

Mr. Horner: I suggest that one more topic ought to be added to the subjects to be discussed in the plenary sessions and workshops, namely, "Government and the law".

Mr. Baldwin: Or "How to break the law without really trying".

Mr. Horner: The hon. member for Frontenac-Lennox and Addington (Mr. Alkenbrack), who has carried out research into these matters, pointed out to me what the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) said on September 27, 1968, as reported at page 498 of *Hansard*. The Prime Minister said:

Mr. Speaker, the estimates which were tabled the other day obviously make it clear that expenses which are not controllable by the government have risen beyond any expectation. It is obvious that we cannot break a statute or an agreement which has been reached with the provinces, and that these expenses have exceeded everyone's expectations.

He went on to say that the government had tried to compensate for that "by cutting very seriously into all the controllable expenditures." Clearly, when the Prime Minister took over in 1968 he had retained enough of his legal learning to know that we ought to keep within the law and obey statutes passed by Parliament. There is no doubt that the Temporary Reserves Act calls on the Minister of Finance (Mr. Benson) to pay money. Section 4 of the act reads as follows:

4. The moneys payable to the board by the Minister of Finance under this act shall be paid as follows:

(a) in respect of the crop year commencing on the 1st day of August, 1955, one-half of the total amount payable for the crop year shall be paid forthwith upon the coming into force of this act and the balance shall be paid in equal monthly payments for the remainder of the crop year; and

(b) in respect of any subsequent crop year, the total amount payable for the crop year shall be paid in equal monthly payments within such crop year.

[Mr. Korchinski.]

That is clear. Now, how much is really owing? There seems to be some doubt about the figure. Many figures were bandied about. On page 15, issue No. 58 of Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence of the Standing Committee on Agriculture, Mr. Treleaven of the Canadian Wheat Board is reported as saying:

The \$60 million was due as of August 1, 1970, of which \$40 million would be applied roughly against the 1969-70 pool account, and the other \$20 million applied against the 1970-71.

Since that time another \$26 million is to be applied against the 1970-71 pool. We are now in what is commonly called the 1971-72 crop year and the payments to go up by \$2.5 million a month. By February of next year there will be \$92.5 million owing to western Canada.

An hon. Member: Shame!

• (9:00 p.m.)

Some hon. Members: Pass the bill.

Mr. Horner: There is one unmistakable fact that these people who holler "Pass the bill" are forgetting. I said that under the Temporary Wheat Reserves Act this year the amount payable goes up at \$2.5 million per month. Next year it may go up at a different rate. Will there be \$100 million available for the government to send out next year? There will not be any money. It is a bribe. It is a one-shot goal using the farmers' own money.

The Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Olson) spoke about the conditions in agriculture. Let us look at that situation. I refer to the July Dominion Bureau of Statistics' index of farm prices for agricultural commodities based on 1961 equalling 100. In 1967 the index for farm prices in the province of Saskatchewan was 106.9, almost 107. It is now 89.7. Farm prices in the province of Saskatchewan are now down to 89.7.

What about the revenue? One can look at the farm cash income. Yesterday I showed these figures to the minister in charge of the Wheat Board (Mr. Lang). He said, "Yes, that is true; but net income has dropped." In 1968 the farm income in Saskatchewan was \$582 million. Last year, 1970, it was \$194 million. The minister in charge of the Wheat Board said, "Jack, those figures are not really accurate. They fail to take into consideration the amount in storage." That is quite right, but the realized net income does not fail to do that. That picture is no better. In 1966 the realized net income in Saskatchewan was \$464 million. In 1970 it was \$193 million. By grouping the three prairie provinces, the realized net income is down 44 per cent.

Some hon. Members: Shame!

Mr. Horner: Isn't it shameful what this government does? The government talks about prices. On January 1, 1970, wheat at Vancouver went down 5-7/8 cents a bushel. At Thunder Bay it went down 7-1/8 cents a bushel. Prices are down. The minister quoted glowing figures to show that grain deliveries are improving. Because there was talk of a fall election the elevators were being emptied, and now they are attempting to fill them. Referring to fiscal and monetary policies, on March 2 the Prime Minister said:

The member knows that in recent budgets we did in effect apply fiscal policies on a regional basis, and we intend to continue to apply these tools in the future in one form or another.