

Withholding of Grain Payments

rary Wheat Reserves Act and pay the cost of storing up to 178 million or 200 million bushels of grain, and anything beyond that amount should be the responsibility of the elevator companies and, eventually, of the grain producers. There is no doubt that the Temporary Wheat Reserves Act tended to place too much emphasis on storage and not enough on handling.

If the minister really wants to get the best out of Bill C-244, I suggest that he ought to propose the inclusion in it of a Canada grain storage act relating to a suggested 414 million bushels carryover. I have a breakdown of the figures and would be glad to provide them to the minister. I am referring to a sensible carryover of all grains. This is what you would need for a basic minimum stock, with reserves being instituted for variations in grade and for unforeseen or interim sales: 320 million bushels of wheat, 17 million bushels of oats, 48 million bushels of barley, 6 million bushels of rye, 8 million bushels of flax and 15 million bushels of rapeseed, for a grand total for all grains of 414 million bushels.

May I say a word regarding elevator capacity in Canada. The country elevators on the Prairies have a capacity of 396 million bushels, the interior terminals and those at Churchill, on the Pacific Coast, at the Lakehead and on the St. Lawrence have a capacity of 276 million bushels and those at the Atlantic ports have a capacity of 8 million bushels. Therefore we have a total storage capacity of 680 million bushels. If you take the carryover of 410 million bushels and say the government of Canada pays for the storage costs on the first 200 million bushels, or pays half the storage costs—one may take it whichever way one likes—you will be left with a working capacity in the country elevators and terminals of 270 million bushels. Mr. Speaker, the minister evades these figures.

I agree that the payment of storage costs by the federal government under the Temporary Wheat Reserves Act tended to help clog the system, whereas a sensible kind of carryover such as I have mentioned would mean that our terminal and country elevator capacity would be used to the extent of about 62 per cent of capacity. In short, there would be working space available for 270 million bushels. This space could be used for emergencies such as those occasioned by wet or damp grains or the need for specific grades. This has been proposed by the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool and the suggestion has been brought forward in this House a number of times. I do not claim credit for being the only one who has spoken about this matter in the House. Several other members have spoken of the concept under which the nation as a whole shares with the farmer the cost of grain storage. We all agree that no longer must we clog our grain handling system to such an extent that we cannot turn a wheel. We all agree we must utilize our storage capacity much more sensibly.

• (5:40 p.m.)

For the minister to attempt to repeal the act is wrong. It is one of the essential reasons why we are opposing, and will continue to oppose, this bill. His threats of political blackmail are not going to dissuade us from opposing it.

Mr. S. J. Korchinski (Mackenzie): Mr. Speaker, I rise with some measure of shame because in this House, our highest institution which is supposed to respect the law of

[Mr. Benjamin.]

the land, I have to ask a minister of the Crown to respect a law enacted by Parliament on another occasion. It is somewhat presumptuous of me to think that I can persuade the minister that he should live up to the law, but it is my duty and I must do it.

I am not sure the people of this country realize the consequences of this type of debate. Many people feel this is a weak debate which centres around the prairie farmers and does not concern anybody else. I say to them and this House that what is involved here is far more than a weak debate or merely something which pertains to the farmers. What is involved is the obligation of the government to live up to the laws of the land. It is not only the obligation of government supporters to back the government which says it intends to do certain things; the executive must realize that unless the laws of the land which have been fashioned by Parliament are held supreme, this Parliament should fold up. This Parliament should fold up if we are going to pass legislation and then have the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) or a minister responsible for a bill say that we must abide by the law as they see fit on a particular day.

I feel sorry for this minister. I do not think he is responsible for what is happening. I think he tries to carry out his ministerial duties. The fact is that the law is being broken by the executive which expects to pass legislation and then impose upon the country this or any other type of legislation. I ask you, Mr. Speaker, whether we serve any useful purpose in this House. If we pass legislation, does it mean anything? I could argue the pros and cons of why we should pay certain moneys, but what concerns me is the fact that there are two sets of laws in this country, one for the executive and one for the man on the street. This bill affects the farmer. The next will affect the labourer, the third will affect the manufacturer, the fourth will affect the school teacher, and so on.

This is supposed to be a democratic society. If the government feels it has the power and authority to withhold or apply certain laws to certain people at certain times as it suits their purpose, then after 13 years in Parliament I want to walk away from this institution because I am no longer useful here, there is nothing I can do. On September 8, as recorded at page 7623 of *Hansard*, I asked the Minister of Justice (Mr. Turner) whether the law was being flouted. I received no reply. Fortunately, my colleague the hon. member for Vegreville (Mr. Mazankowski) raised the issue. He said this question is far more serious. Since that time I have watched the proceedings of this House with interest.

As an observer, I admire the fact that somewhere in this institution there is hope. However, there cannot be any hope for an administration like the present one. There is only one thing wrong with this institution, that is, the executive. The executive is led by the Prime Minister who has only one thing in mind, dictatorial power. I do not know what the rest of the cabinet does.

Mr. Dinsdale: They say yes.

Mr. Korchinski: I do not have the opportunity to listen to their meetings. However, if the Prime Minister has the almighty power to tell a minister of the Crown that he has no business paying a sum of money which Parliament has authorized to be paid, what more can we do? What other