

*Withholding of Grain Payments*

The lack of support for the Temporary Wheat Reserves Act was emphasized by the fact that when the farm organizations came before the committee, though they were generally quite free to express criticisms of what the government was doing, or not doing, for the prairie farmer—

**Mr. Peters:** And did.

**Mr. Lang:**—and they did, because they were very conscious of the fact that as long as the prairie farmer is in a serious position he is not likely to be appreciative of things which were already being done; they were demanding, basically, that more be done. As leaders of farm organizations they might not have been willing to be satisfied with my undertaking to examine the over-all situation in which farmers find themselves. When they appeared before the committee they did not object to the repeal of the Temporary Wheat Reserves Act as of July 1, 1970, except to the extent that they came forward with alternative proposals involving the payment of money to farmers from the treasury. Basically, though, there was no objection to the repeal of the act. None of the farm representatives said the act was inherently good legislation. That is significant.

**Mr. Peters:** They never even mentioned it, and I have been a member of the committee for 15 years.

**Mr. Lang:** Members opposite have tried to suggest that the bill before the House could somehow be dealt with in such a way that the parts which are very popular among the farmers, involving the simple payment of money, could be separated from the rest of the legislation. But the government is bound to come forward with packages of proposals which are intended to improve the farm situation. It is very easy for members opposite to say: We would like the good part of that, and the good part of this.

**Mr. Baldwin:** What part of C-244 is bad?

**Mr. Lang:** It is easy for them to say: We would like more money for the people in our region. But, as I suggested to the leader of the Social Credit party, members representing the province of Quebec or other parts of eastern Canada might complain that the government was doing too much for western farmers as compared with what was being done for farmers, say, in Quebec.

**Mr. Horner:** The government is robbing the farmers of money.

**Mr. Lang:** The Temporary Wheat Reserves Act is agreed generally to be an inadequate piece of legislation.

**Mr. Lewis:** It is still the law.

**Mr. Lang:** With the greater emphasis on the production of barley and rapeseed, it was inevitable that a substitute for it be found. It was important, also, that the elevator system should not remain clogged with wheat as in the past. As a result of the fact that this year the elevators are no longer completely clogged with wheat, it has been possible for producers to market grain in larger quantities in the month of August and the first weeks of September than for a significant period of time. Indeed, during the first six weeks of the crop year until the week ending

[Mr. Lang.]

September 15, producers have marketed a total of 83.5 million bushels of grain compared with 46.3 million bushels in the previous year and 36.7 million bushels in the year before that. This means that almost as much has been marketed by producers this year as in the two previous years together.

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

**Mr. Horner:** At half the price.

**Mr. Lang:** This is partly due to the fact that in our attempts to help the farmer and our tremendous emphasis on marketing, marketing and more marketing, not only did we see the completion of a record year of exports last year but we are still seeing, on September 15, exports running significantly ahead of the same time last year. Last year, when we were on our way to a record year—hon. members opposite have been speaking of the poor years—90.7 million bushels of grain were exported. As at the same date this year 98.5 million bushels of grain have been exported.

• (4:40 p.m.)

I have explained the alternative that faces this House in terms of reaching the question on Bill C-244 and enacting a series of proposals that are a significant improvement in the situation facing the farmers on the Prairies. I hope that this improvement will soon be realized.

In addition, may I say that I will continue to work for improved and better programs for the farmers of the prairie provinces for whom, in my responsibility for the Canadian Wheat Board, I have a special interest. I continue to hope that in presenting these proposals to the House they may gain the support of hon. members opposite.

**Mr. Nielsen:** Obey the law.

**Mr. Lang:** I also suggest to hon. members opposite that it is extremely difficult for the government to put forward and to implement laws that benefit the prairie farmers as long as—

**Mr. Horner:** You have made a tool out of the Canadian Wheat Board.

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel):** Order, please. The Chair wishes to bring the House to order and to ask the co-operation of all hon. members in letting the minister be heard and complete his remarks. I am wondering whether the minister has concluded. In any event, I think this rule should apply throughout this debate and all other debates.

**Mr. Baldwin:** Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, we would be glad to obey your request, but would you also remonstrate with the minister by asking him to be relevant and to speak to the motion before the House.

**Mr. Lang:** Mr. Speaker, I have reviewed for the House the decision taken by the government to offer the House a package of proposals affecting the prairie farmers that is better, in my opinion, than anything that existed before. Included in that package was the repeal of the Temporary Wheat Reserves Act effective July 31, 1970. The bill containing these proposals will continue to be debated. That