

when the west coast grain inspectors did not report to work, at Thunder Bay the government inspectors did not report to work either, and there was a derailment of the CNR at mile 81.1 at the Albreda substation. In the fifteenth week all unions were working.

In the sixteenth week again all unions were working and, lest the Grits become too happy let us remind them that a derailment of the CPR took place in that week. However, that is the end of the joy, and certainly the Liberals deserve no credit for it because on the seventeenth week from November 17 to 23 the west coast, Thunder Bay and government grain inspectors strike is in effect. Also, the British Columbia railroad shop craft strike is on, there is a CPR derailment at mile 68.9 at the Windermere substation, a CPR derailment at mile 105.6 at the Cascade substation, and a CPR derailment at the Rossland substation which was closed on November 25.

Let us move on to the eighteenth week of the crop year from November 24 to 30. The west coast and Thunder Bay government grain inspectors strike is on. The west coast and interior government grain inspectors returned to work at 12 noon on December 5, 1974, and the Thunder Bay government inspectors returned to work on December 5, 1974. We now have tremendous joy so far as the Liberals are concerned, despite the fact that they had nothing to do with it. There were three weeks in which all unions were working.

This is a terrible history of strikes and derailments all of which effect the farmer. Then, on the twenty-fourth week from January 5 to 11, the British Columbia railroad shop craft returned to work, but there is a derailment of the CPR at Revelstoke, B.C. We find that when we consider the thirty-six weeks, including the present week, that in almost none of that time was there any smooth delivery of grain in this country.

It is about time that we laid the record straight and began to understand what farming is. Farming is not a life style, it is not a way of life. Farming is the production of food, the most essential of industries, the most essential of all businesses. Yet, despite the fact that food is required to maintain life, the government has not done anything constructive to encourage the shipping of grain to market at a time when, if we could hypothetically distribute food around the world, we would not have enough protein to go around. The situation is extremely critical, and it is high time that we put all our efforts into attempting to get grain to market faster.

We heard the hon. member for Skeena (Mrs. Campagnolo) say tonight that farmers are not the only Canadians, and she challenged the prairie farmers' representatives here in parliament not to make such an issue about farm people. I also concede that farmers are not the only people, but I darn well claim that they are people and their rights are at least equal to those of other people. When we take a look at what has been happening in the grain movement, starting in May of last year, we find that in total there have only been eleven weeks of free movement of grain in this country. I say that there is not another industry in Canada which could operate year after year under the insensitive kind of policies which the government sets with regard to the agricultural industry.

Grain Shipments

It is important to set the record straight. The strikes that were taking place recently were supposedly rotating strikes. Yet, what did we witness on the west coast at the port of Vancouver? The only strikes that were continuous and not being rotated were those that were affecting the grain industry. Labour organizations were once again putting on the pressure where they knew it hurts. I think it is time we heard not just speeches from the government in which it talks about the right to strike but speeches about the rights of all Canadians, whether they be farmers, labour organizations or people in management. All rights go with responsibilities, and rights and responsibilities should not be separated. A right is something that is earned. Those who practice rights, irrespective of whether or not people die as a result, and irrespective of whether or not agriculture survives, should expect those rights to be challenged.

The question is whether or not we should be allowed to practice the right to strike when the national interest is at stake. What we hear from the Prime Minister, the Minister of Labour, and the President of the Treasury Board is that despite the fact that agriculture has been disrupted for almost two solid years, this is not a national issue.

● (0140)

I know of no hypocrisy greater than singling out within a nation a group of people, who are important both in terms of numbers and in what they produce, and then turn a blind eye to them and say that we do not care about their interests because we are protecting the interests of labour and management. It is high time that we lent full consideration to the damage inflicted upon innocent third parties.

I have made the following statement in this House before, and I will make it again tonight, that I believe there are legal grounds for farm organizations in this country to sue with regard to demurrage charges laid upon them due to strikes this past year at the port of Vancouver. I know of no business principle which allows two parties to negotiate and incur an expense and then charge that expense to a third party, yet that is what has happened at the port of Vancouver. We witnessed labour and management causing ships to be held up in port incurring an expense of at least \$17 million—and there are estimates that it may be well over \$50 million—and the full amount will be borne by the western Canadian farmer.

I think that that is such a shame that it should be tested in our courts because there are no precedents whereby two parties can incur an expense and charge that expense to a third party. I think that anyone who is closely observing the labour-management disputes is witnessing many kinds of illegal activity. It is on that basis that I think there is still a tremendous amount to be done in terms of setting up programs to alleviate these labour disputes which are so drastically affecting prairie farmers and subsequently our world markets.

There have been only two occasions since August of 1973 when vessels have not been waiting to load in Vancouver, and those two occasions amounted to only 18 working days. As of March 10 of this year, 30 vessels have been waiting and 15,000 boxcars from the west are bunched up at the port of Vancouver, and so we see, Mr. Speaker—