

Business of Supply

Mr. Speaker, I did not think any Liberal cabinet member would have the audacity to come into the House and invite members of the opposition or anyone else to join them in getting more efficiency in grain-handling and marketing problems. After their handling of the problems of last year—damp grain, inefficient boxcar allocation, transportation difficulties, low prices and export figures—I did not think any Liberal minister would have such nerve. With such a dismal record, I should think shame would prevent them issuing such an invitation.

Let us look at some of the latest quota figures. I have a statement dated January 19, 1970, which shows that over half—that is, 894—of the delivery points in the prairie provinces are still on a unit quota while the other 893 points are on a one-bushel quota. This compares with over 900 delivery points which were on either a two, three or four-bushel quota at the same date in the last crop year. In the minister's province of Saskatchewan, and mine, at the present time there are 540 delivery points on a unit quota and only 419 on a one-bushel quota. Is this a record of which to be proud? Will it encourage anyone to join the minister or the Liberal government in proceeding to meet the great challenge of the future?

Mr. Speaker, it seemed to me that the minister may even have had visions of grandeur when he invited everyone to join with him, that perhaps he would be the Messiah to lead the west out of its wilderness. But I think most people have realized that they cannot look to the Liberal government or a Liberal minister to lead them anywhere except into deeper trouble. I suggest it will take more than the same old words to deal with the present crisis. The farmers are sick and tired of the bungling evidenced by the present situation. They want performance, action, policies and a square deal. That is all they want, but many of them feel they are being "taken" in more ways than one.

Last Friday the report of the Barber Commission on farm machinery costs, dealing particularly with tractors and combines, was presented to this House. The report noted that in 1968 prices for various tractors in Britain ranged from \$837 to \$2,287 lower than in Canada. This has been common knowledge for some time, but in spite of questions from farm organizations and others the Liberal government put off the evil day when they would have to face the facts.

The commission report went on to suggest that multi-national corporations, such as are represented by the large farm machinery companies, are independent of the national authority which applies to individual companies. At the present time there is no international authority to exercise control over them. With Canada's industry and trade largely in the hands of multi-national corporations, the independence with which these companies operate has far-reaching implications. The farmers of western Canada have recognized this situation for a long time and now expect the government to take concrete action in dealing with the report of the Barber Commission.

When it comes to elevator companies, I have one example before me of a farmer who sold malting barley to the Pioneer Grain Company. I think the Minister of Supply and Services (Mr. Richardson) has knowledge of this company. The sale was for 1695 bushels. I saw the invoice and it contained a list of deductions as long as your arm. First of all, government inspection and weighing, \$4.50; cleaning, a half cent per bushel. Then there were 415 pounds of screenings for which he received 99 cents credit; removal of stones, five cents per bushel—although in this case the land was stone-free—elevator and handling charges, 3½ cents per bushel; service charge, one cent per bushel; storage for 34 days, \$19.21 total. This was because the farmer had asked that the cheque be made out in 1970 because he preferred to receive payment then for income tax purposes. Interest on freight—again this was because the farmer asked for his cheque in 1970 even though the grain company had the grain at its disposal and probably moved it into its own market channels—for 39 days was \$1.62; bank exchange, one-eighth of one per cent. These deductions were made from the farmer's cheque before he received any money for his malting barley.

Mr. Speaker, a good deal has been said in this debate about the transportation tie-up at the present time and over the past year. I suggest that the railways are guilty of gross negligence in dealing with this matter. My information is that in the last three months of 1969 the railways were 8,000 cars short of what the Canadian Wheat Board asked them to place in Lakehead positions. This situation is partly responsible for the situation at the Lakehead. Is this another example of efficiency?