

Grain

know what I am talking about because the government has a considerable financial interest in the Alexbow itself. Incidentally, the Minister of Transport (Mr. Hellyer) did not even know the name of it when I brought it to his attention.

Mr. Scott Alexander, the inventor of the Alexbow, has told me personally that the port of Churchill would be much easier to keep open with the Alexbow than any of the St. Lawrence ports in the wintertime, and he sees no reason whatever, if he is given the opportunity, that he could not take a barge in from an eastern seaport to Churchill in mid-winter—January, February, or any time you wish to mention.

I am not advocating that next year or the year after the port of Churchill should be kept open during wintertime, but I am advocating that the port of Churchill could be kept open for a much greater length of time if the government would take action to see that it is kept open. I again refer to my belief that the government is listening too closely to shipping interests in other Canadian ports. In 1905 and 1910 ships were coming into the port of Churchill after the middle of November without the aid of icebreaking equipment, without any radar and without lighthouse services. So there is no reason in the world that this port cannot be kept open much longer each season.

One other facility that should be located at the port of Churchill—and this is something the government should look into—is a pilot boat in order that pilot services can be rendered at all times regardless of weather conditions because the present pilot boat is not suitable for all weather conditions. There should also be an increase in the storage capacity over the present 5 million bushel capacity to 10 million bushels. The larger ships are now capable of loading up to one million bushels and therefore the present storage of 5 million bushels is not sufficient to guarantee there will be sufficient grain at the port at all times. The additional storage capacity would also make it possible to carry stocks of other types of grain besides wheat in addition to providing for more grains of each type.

In conclusion I would say to the minister and members of the treasury benches that a good look should be taken at this port. They will recall that a few years ago some sales were made to Czechoslovakia and representatives of that government came to Ottawa to talk with representatives of this government

or their predecessors. Every assurance was given to me in the house at that time that those representatives from Czechoslovakia would be made fully aware of the facilities at Churchill and the savings they could enjoy by taking their grain out of Churchill.

I am not in a position to make the charge that this information was not given to them. But Mr. Jim Gray, the secretary-treasurer of the Hudson Bay Route Association, in talking to these Czechoslovakian representatives was told they never received this information. We did clear up the situation when the Russian sales were made by Canada because these people were in the gallery and I had the opportunity of telling them there was the opportunity of shipping through Churchill.

• (1:40 a.m.)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gilbert Rondeau (Shefford): Mr. Speaker, I would like to say a few words on the important problem which is before us to-day, and I will try to remain within the ambit of the matter now under discussion.

The problem concerns mainly western Canada, but this situation is not germane to us, for if there is a lack of box cars to carry wheat to the port of Vancouver, that reminds us of a familiar situation that we, of the Creditiste Party, have been denouncing for many years, namely the accumulation of wheat as a result of the lack of box cars. Needless to say that hon. members know it, and more particularly the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Olson).

We have denounced the economic bottleneck which is affecting Canada. There is obviously an abundance of wheat in western Canada and there is a market for our production, because foreign countries are willing to buy our wheat. The Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce (Mr. Pepin) shakes his head; I would like to know which argument would convince him. We are having difficulty with wheat exports and transportation, a problem which has already been mentioned in this house, since the Cr ditistes are represented here since 1935. The situation is the same, from the economic point of view. In other words, it is production in relation to consumption, and the transportation facilities are inadequate.

Complaints are now heard about the lack of box cars, while we, Cr ditistes, complain because for the last 30 years the transportation facilities do not make the link between