

Feed Grain

with them. Indeed, we have seen little or no action for coming to grips with this problem. We must give immediate attention to the establishment of a public disputes commission. The difficulty is this: no body or tribunal has been established to examine contracts now in force and to deal with problems and grievances before contracts expire. No single body has been established to encourage or to promote the renegotiation of a contract before its expiry date. I submit that there is necessity for such a commission and its establishment is more urgently needed now than ever before.

If the government does not actively seek a new approach we shall see a repetition of this dismal performance—if not with the grain handlers, then with the public servants. The Canadian people are dissatisfied and impatient, and look to this government for leadership. Government members asked for suggestions. My colleagues have offered suggestions and alternatives in this debate and on previous occasions. So far the government has failed to act: that is the crux of the difficulty.

● (0130)

Let us set up the machinery that is required. Let us restore good faith between management and labour. Let us at least attempt to avoid similar situations. That is a responsibility the Canadian people gave to this government. If the government would move in that direction, Madam Speaker, I am certain it would find support from this side of the House.

[Translation]

Mr. Albert Béchard (Bonaventure-Îles-de-la-Madeleine): Madam Speaker, I will try to confine myself to the limits I suggested earlier and for that reason, my comments will be very brief.

But I thought it was my duty to participate in this debate for two main reasons. First, because in some way I have suggested this debate tonight because of the question I asked the Right Hon. Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) and to the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Whelan). Indeed, they can laugh in the opposite, they congratulated themselves a short time ago. They say that it should not have partisanship, but if they want to have some, there are others who are able to do so.

Madam Speaker, I would like to repeat for the sake of those who did not hear it, and I believe that with my question I woke up the Opposition and even the member for Saint-Hyacinthe (Mr. Wagner) who was far away, heard it and he came back to give his speech tonight and there was only partisanship in the first part and there was fairly good common sense in the second one.

So, Madam Speaker, I repeat the question I asked yesterday. I was referring to a telegram from the Poultry Producers' Federation of Quebec, which has been delivered to my riding office in Bonaventure, but thanks to a very great organization, was immediately transmitted to me and this morning I had the Federation telegram in my office here on the Hill.

Here is the question I put to the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Whelan):

Has he received a telegram from the Quebec poultry producers association—

[Mr. Wise.]

... then I reminded him of the substance of the message. Here is the Minister's answer:

Mr. Speaker, we have received many telegrams but I am not sure if I have seen that one concerning the possible shortage of feed grains. The grain elevator in Quebec City has been opened for two or three days now and grain is moving out of that area. Other ships are moving into the area.

... that was said a moment ago. And then I asked the hon. Minister of Labour and in his absence the right hon. Prime Minister, the following question, as reported in page 4807 of yesterday's *Hansard*:

I asked the Minister of Labour, or in his absence, his parliamentary secretary, or the Prime Minister, whether the government intends to take legislative measures identical to those Parliament passed to settle the longshoremen's strike in the port of Vancouver to settle the strike now paralyzing the ports of Montreal, Trois-Rivières and Quebec City?

Here is the Prime Minister's answer:

Mr. Speaker, there always comes a time in a strike when the public interest must be weighed against the right to strike. The government and the cabinet are now in the process of looking into this matter.

That is what rang a bell in the ear of the Opposition. I quote again:

For the time being we have no statement to make, but one thing is sure: the Minister of Labour and the government are watching the situation very closely.

Madam Speaker, at the very beginning of this conflict in the port of Montreal, it were members on the government's side, among whom the hon. member for Charlevoix (Mr. Lapointe), who first brought this to the government's attention, followed by the hon. member for Beauce (Mr. Caron) and the hon. members for Compton (Mr. Tessier) and for Laval (Mr. Roy) and others. Then people will say that the government is aware of the longshoremen's strike thanks to the Opposition.

When the possibility, and the newspapers referred to this at length yesterday, of a settlement other than the one now expected is envisaged, we then say: We must ask for an emergency debate and we shall take credit for it. Those are the people who are asking us to act and to unite, to defend the interests of a seriously affected area and to co-operate not as supporters but as members for an area affected at this time.

When I heard this evening at the very beginning of this debate the hon. member for Joliette (Mr. La Salle), I felt we were back in that dark period which we have unfortunately known in Quebec under a government which has now disappeared and which was called the *Union Nationale*, when the workers and public servants were fighting to unite, to form unions, in order to defend their rights, and God knows that they were downtrodden during that dark period, well, I felt right back in that period once again. This unhealthy situation was fortunately corrected by a government to which the hon. member for Saint-Hyacinthe (Mr. Wagner) belonged, when citizens were allowed to unite to defend their interests and to do so in all freedom.

It is all very well to charge the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Whelan) with every imaginable sin, but are the hon. member for Joliette and all the others who accused him of those misdeeds aware that there are laws giving those people the right to strike? Do they know that even the Minister of Agriculture as well as the whole cabinet must