

*Grain*

we have witnessed over the past year. Certainly, when the Minister Without Portfolio and other members of the government tried to point out that the exports this year are higher than they were at the same point last year, that is really not bragging about very much because last year they descended to the lowest level for quite a number of years. This of course brought on a situation of low and slow deliveries. Following this, as a result of the harvest conditions, we had the problem of tough and damp grain.

Finally, the government acted and brought in the three bushel quota for tough and damp grain. I think it is recognized in all quarters of the grain industry now that this quota has been responsible for some of the problems which are presently facing the industry. I will not deal with this at any length but I think it should be noted in a discussion of this subject, not that there is a three bushel quota now but that the introduction of this quota has worked some inequities and has helped to produce some of the problems that exist in the grain industry at present. As a result, it was quite obvious there would have to be a very extensive drying program. Farmers started to dry grain on their own, but it was not very long until reports were coming back that a number of samples of dried grain were tested by the Board of Grain Commissioners and rejected. This left farmers in a quandary as to what to do. There is still no real direction from the government as to what might be done on a co-ordinated basis in terms of pooling the resources of the federal and provincial governments, of the grain industry, and of farm organizations to deal with this difficult problem.

After that there was a shortage of box cars, which again created a difficult situation. Action was taken and the problem was eventually overcome. Then, there were difficulties about unloading at the terminals, and some of these are still plaguing us. Then a grave situation arose at the Port of Vancouver, causing serious injury to the grain industry.

What is the solution? It seems obvious that we need more adequate co-ordination and direction within the entire scope of the operations in the industry, including farm deliveries, the operations of elevator companies, transportation and terminal companies, shipping companies, the Wheat Board and the Board of Grain Commissioners. There needs to be better direction, and proposals to this end have been put forward on a number of occasions by members of this party.

I, myself, have made proposals to this effect. The minister's reply to a recent suggestion of mine was that we should first do some co-ordination here. I do not mind that but I do submit that co-ordination is first required on the part of the government. Requests have been made for the appointment of a transport controller, or a grain controller to help bring this co-ordination about by dealing with all aspects of this situation. This proposal is not new. In 1955, for instance, a transport controller was appointed and I believe he did an effective job. In the early 'sixties a problem arose in connection with heavy sales to China, and the government of the day to its credit called upon the services of a former commissioner of the Wheat Board, Mr. Riddell, to supervise and co-ordinate activities at Vancouver. From the information I have, I gather that the different authorities concerned felt they were doing all they could to deal with the situation. However, when they got together with the co-ordinator they found they were able to improve their operations and speed up the handling of the grain.

The minister seemed to reject this idea yesterday; he thought it would result in the onus being placed upon one man to take action. I believe it has been shown that this is not the case, provided the individual concerned approaches his duties in a sensitive manner and bearing in mind that there are different authorities involved each with his own sphere of operations. Up to the present we have seen a disjointed approach by the government.

• (12:40 a.m.)

Finally, we have the comments of the minister in this debate tonight. In the contribution of the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce (Mr. Pepin) he reported that there were 31 ships in the port of Vancouver at this moment. The hon. member for Vancouver East (Mr. Winch) noted that there were in fact 33 ships either waiting in the harbour or at berth at 5.15 this afternoon, Ottawa time, I believe. So, he must have more up to date information available to him.

The Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce related a number of problems that had been experienced over the past few weeks. He mentioned there had been weather problems, and this is true. He pointed out that the handling of high moisture grain involves certain difficulties, that it was a very slow process to unload and handle such grain. I do not quarrel with that.