

*Government Orders*

• (1140)

The minister said: "Well, there are no ships in Churchill".

The minister was wrong. The minister is completely unaware of what is happening in the port of Churchill, western Canada's only prairie seaport. It is not surprising that you hear these statements from the Prime Minister, the minister for grains and oilseeds, the Minister of Agriculture and other Conservatives. They don't even know what is going on at a prairie port. They don't even know that they are closing down a port early. They don't even know that grain has been sitting in full grain cars for over 10 days, grain that should have been going to Churchill is sitting at the Hudson Bay junction, not flowing.

The Minister of Agriculture also got up and said that there is no storage at Churchill. There is lots of storage room in Churchill. Again the ministers of this Crown, who get up and pretend to be so concerned about farmers, do not even know what is happening in their own areas of responsibility.

Madam Speaker, I could go on for a long time but I think what we want to resolve in this House today is how, now that the Minister of State for Grains and Oilseeds has caused all this commotion, how we resolve this dispute—not just for today, not just for next week, but for the long term.

One of the suggestions that I had made was that of the three person panel, instead of having a mediator-arbitrator. I talked to the minister and he said this was a cumbersome approach, that it is not done federally. Well, it is done in many provinces and it works successfully. I say that not from an academic background or anything of that nature, I know it works because I have used three person arbitration boards when I was negotiating for teachers in northern Manitoba and as an employer who has negotiated on the employment side I have sat on a three person arbitration board.

From personal experience I know it works. I really would recommend that the Minister of Labour and this government consider a way of having this legislation passed fairly quickly through this House and at the same time make sure that the local concerns of the people of Thunder Bay are understood.

The minister might be able to find a mediator-arbitrator who is experienced. He might find someone who as an individual is respected by both labour and management. But that does not guarantee that the concerns of

the employees in Thunder Bay, the concerns of the employers, are truly understood when the final decision is being made. That is the advantage of a three person panel; you don't have to have this arbitrator sitting by himself or herself in isolation, making his or her decision on the basis of various formal presentations that have been made. He or she would be in a room with two people who have understanding of the situation, the history in Thunder Bay, the history of the elevators, the real economic situation that faces both the employees and the employer. A three person panel allows for those concerns to be dealt with in whatever final report that comes out.

It ensures local participation. It ensures a thorough understanding of the issues and it ensures that the history of Thunder Bay where I believe somewhere in the neighbourhood of a thousand positions have disappeared over the last while, is understood and when making a decision this is dealt with.

Madam Speaker, I cannot stress how important this is. I have also been in a situation where we have had a single arbitrator. I have seen arbitrators with all their knowledge and with all their experience lack the important information to come down with a settlement that really resolves the issues that are in conflict.

As I said, we have many fine arbitrators in this country, many very skilled mediator-arbitrators but they do not necessarily have all the information at their fingertips that is necessary.

I would say that there can be an almost just end to this labour dispute in Thunder Bay. Forget about the minister for grains and oilseeds' unnecessary and unwarranted intervention; forget about the fact that various cabinet ministers have got up in this House and blamed the workers for everything, because that has happened; forget about the fact that mediation was never really given a chance to work in Thunder Bay; forget about the fact that this legislation was announced not by the Minister of Labour but by another minister who should not have been involved in the first place.

Let us look at what we can do now. Let us look for a way where this government and this House can show justice to the people of Thunder Bay. Let us ensure that we have a three person panel that can understand the issues as they apply in Thunder Bay, understand the broader issues of grain handling, the concerns of the pools, but make sure they also understand what is really happening in that community. That is one way that this government can show good faith.