

Grain

ruin, and the wording in this motion, are not a service to the Canadian grain producers or to Canada generally. In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I want to say that the great problem that we have, and it is a great problem, in meeting all of these commitments is the adverse weather conditions. Anyone who wants to be even reasonably fair knows that that is true. It is a fact that in the cold weather train loads of grain that have to be pulled over the Rocky Mountains have to be reduced not only by half but substantially less than half so that there is enough power to pull them over the hill.

An hon. Member: That is not a new problem.

Mr. Olson: That is not a new problem but I wish hon. gentlemen opposite would hear me out. I sat here very quietly when they were speaking. In fact I was accused of being silent. The fact of the matter was that when we had these increased sales for December and January delivery coming at the same time as these very severe low temperatures, it was not possible for the Canadian Wheat Board, or indeed for the railways or anybody else, to schedule according to what is normal because this weather was not normal.

I am told that if the present cold weather stays in Edmonton for three more days it will break all records in the recorded weather history of western Canada for the longest period at the lowest temperatures. Now, Mr. Speaker, if that is the kind of criticism hon. gentlemen opposite want to level at the government and the transportation companies, that they should do something about this—well, that seems to be what they are arguing.

Instead of this kind of unjustifiable criticism, certainly the Canadian Wheat Board, the staff, the transportation industry and other sectors of the grain industry vitally involved in this whole thing should be urged to more efforts but they should also be commended for having made the best of a difficult situation under very adverse conditions.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Olson: I could deal with many of the other details that have been raised in the arguments offered but there is not much time left to me, Mr. Speaker, and a lot of this detail has been gone over a number of times during the question periods. I would hope that taking into account the economic well being of the grain farmers and of the other people in the grain industry, for this year and

indeed for the future, we could have a somewhat higher degree of co-operation in trying to find solutions rather than what we have had thus far which is really nothing much more than severe, unjustified, unwarranted criticism.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Winch: Would the minister allow a question?

Mr. Olson: Yes, certainly.

Mr. Winch: In view of the minister's concluding remarks that the pile up was because of weather and, shall I say, an act of God will the minister please explain why, with all the wheat in the assembly yards in Vancouver and en route, four of our shipping berths are not being used because the right kind of grain is not in the right place at the right time?

Mr. Olson: Mr. Speaker, I hope I have enough time left to answer that question. I suggest that if the hon. member had done a little more homework he could have found out about that too. The answer is as follows: with the many grades and indeed the number of carloads of damp grain that are in the marshalling yards it is almost a switching nightmare to get the No. 2 dry grain out of there and into the elevators so that it can be loaded. That is part of it. The other part of the story is as the hon. member pointed out, that only about half of the grain in the marshalling yards and enroute to Vancouver was No. 2. I do not have the precise figures in front of me but I think that a very small percentage, less than 50 per cent of it, a minor percentage, is No. 2. Therefore, to keep the pipe line open it is necessary to do a very complex job of switching in those yards so that they can get the carloads of No. 2 switched out to the right terminal where ships are loading No. 2.

The hon. member also knows that the weather conditions in the port have not been normal. They have been severe and this adds to the difficulties of the men working in the yards, on the unloading chutes and all through the whole operation. The adverse weather conditions affected the total output. So, Mr. Speaker, it is not a question of someone standing around and not doing a good job, whether it be the workers in the marshalling yards or at the terminal elevators along the way. It is that they have been