

*Feed Grain*

At the World Food Conference in Rome, according to the newspapers, discussions dealt with the means to store food supplies in countries stricken with famine or droughts. We have heard of it here too, in Canada because the Canadian delegation took a very active part in those discussions. The Minister of Agriculture himself took part in them.

Regardless of conditions or circumstances, supplies of grains should be ensured in situations such as the one we now know. So much the better if we can ensure the storage of food products in needy countries, but we should also be able to ensure the same to our eastern producers who are now in difficulty; at other times, western producers will have problems, and we must make sure the feed they need is then available. The Canadian Livestock Feed Board must have the means and authority to give those assurances.

In his summary, the hon. member for Joliette (Mr. La Salle) appealed to the honesty of hon. members, and especially to that of the Quebec members who sit on this side of the House. In the same breath, Madam Speaker, the hon. member for Joliette implied something when he uttered a word, the word "cowardice", hinting that some members whom he urged to be honest could be cowards. If we look into the meaning of honesty, we find that it is to describe things according to reality. I wonder how he can urge anyone to be honest when he himself, by implying the word "cowardice", was surely not giving a true account of things and of the exactness of duty, of the sense of duty, of the trust, of the integrity of Liberal members, of my colleagues on this side of the Commons.

Madam Speaker, the situation now existing in the province of Quebec could lead to many things. It is obvious that due to higher costs, our farmers' income will drop. Not many people in our society agree to a lower income. Every day there is talk about indexing, salary increases. Even we are talking about it. Farmers will get less income. Their income had already dropped because of the higher cost of living and following a labour dispute, it will decrease still more. This is not normal and should not happen again.

Also, one wonders whether some animals when they are sent early to the slaughter-house, do have the quality that they could have had, and this is detrimental to the consumers, even though it will not be necessarily detrimental to health, but the product will not have the same quality.

Also there is the danger of an imbalance in our production. If we send cattle to the slaughter-house before the proper time, it is clear, in view of the period where the supplies will not be the same, there will be an imbalance in our production.

Then, to conclude, I wish to remind the members of three suggestions which I feel should be accepted. First, we should ask the longshoremen to allow the millers to have access to supplies; secondly, as Canadians, we should take measures in order that grains reach the places where they are needed; finally, we should give to the Canadian Feed Grain Board the authority and powers necessary to meet such difficulties.

[English]

**Mr. John Wise (Elgin):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to make some comments on the motion before the House dealing

with grain tie-ups in Quebec ports. First, however, may I join with other members of this House in complimenting the hon. member for Bellechasse (Mr. Lambert) and my colleague the hon. member for Joliette (Mr. La Salle) for bringing this matter to the attention of the House. We are considering an important and urgent matter, namely, a situation which is preventing feed grain supplies from reaching feed mills and livestock producers in certain communities in Quebec.

There is some argument about the extent of the emergency. Obviously, if this matter is not resolved quickly, some livestock and poultry producers will have no option except to ship to market, and there will be a surplus on the market and prices will be depressed. It is most unfortunate that members on my side of the House once again were compelled to act because of the government's lack of leadership in this situation.

On March 19, less than a month ago, we debated a similar sort of motion dealing with grain movement on the west coast. Strikes, labour disputes, work stoppages, poor rail facilities and services have plagued the entire movement of grain in this country, particularly in the last year. When grain began moving on the St. Lawrence on October 3 last, it was the first such movement of grain since August 7. Obviously, a new method for approaching these difficulties must be found. I submit that only one other industrialized country has lost more man-days through strikes than Canada: that situation is totally unacceptable. The record shows that last year we lost 9.2 million man-days through strikes, an increase of nearly 60 per cent over what we lost in the previous year. That is not a good record of achievement for this government.

The government was warned many times, particularly by members on my side, of feed grain shortages in Quebec and in Quebec elevators. Obviously, those warnings were almost totally dismissed or ignored. It is true that Quebec producers are the most seriously affected, but it is also true that the entire regional economy will suffer if some agreement is not forthcoming immediately. Every Canadian is affected in some way by these disputes, and we feel their effects long after they are settled.

If the government's performance and reliability does not soon improve, and drastically, we stand to lose valuable export markets for our grains. When potential buyers regard Canada as an unreliable supplier of grain, their attitude not only hurts one's pride but it hurts the Canadian economy. We accept orders, sign contracts and then cannot deliver on time. We make commitments to provide food aid, and cannot even deliver the food to the ship which is to carry the food to where it is most needed.

Obviously, inflation and the uncertainty brought about by continuing inflationary pressures continue to be factors in the breakdown of contract negotiations. Unless we are prepared to tackle the problems at the root of our difficulties and allay the fears of organized labour, of public servants and of those on low or fixed incomes who are afraid their incomes will not keep up with the cost of living, we shall continue to see unrest in those segments of our society.

On July 8 last the government was given a clear mandate to govern and to show leadership in solving these problems—and it still lacks an effective policy for dealing