

Grain

are paying these charges. One shipping company in respect of one ship has put in a bill for \$32,000 in demurrage charges. Let the Prime Minister flippantly reply to that fact. Let him take the blame, and let the government pay the demurrage charges.

What does the government have to say about the lawsuits being initiated by the shipping companies against the wheat board? These companies had arranged dates to load grain, yet the grain is not there. The ships are there and they are losing cargoes and contracts. They blame the wheat board because they cannot load at Vancouver. Is the government going to accept these lawsuits or is it looking into this problem?

What does the minister have to say about the grades of wheat moving out to the west coast? Vancouver facilities can handle something like 2,000 bushels per hour in the drying system. There was no need to move out a lot of damp grain. The wheat board could have moved out damp grain as fast as the drying facilities could handle it. Most of the storage facilities in Vancouver should have been used for dry grain. The damp grain this winter could have been stored a lot better in western Canada under the cold conditions. Instead it was stored in Vancouver and it might well be heating at this moment because of the warm climate and the severe dampness. The government mishandled this grain movement by shipping damp grain to Vancouver. That is the first mistake it made.

Instead of appointing a committee seven or eight weeks ago to organize and co-ordinate the shipment of grain to Vancouver, the government appointed a co-ordinating committee about two weeks ago. This action should have been taken four or five weeks earlier. The situation was obvious two months ago. It was obvious that the wheat board could not live up to the contracts which had been made in respect of shipments.

A ship today does not suddenly appear on the horizon like the ships sailed by Columbus when he discovered America. A ship takes some time to get to Vancouver and the wheat board knows that it is coming for a certain grade of wheat. Surely to goodness, this wheat should have been available.

I have some doubt as to whether Japan is prepared to accept damp grain. During the Christmas recess I travelled throughout my constituency and saw thousands and thousands of bushels of grain still in the fields. This is dry grain. There is a great deal of dry

grain in southern Alberta. The government could have moved huge amounts of dry grain for storage in Vancouver. The government turned its back on this fact, and paid no attention to the situation.

The minister asked what his job is. Let me suggest it is to provide leadership and inspiration to his department to provide greater service. How could he inspire his department when, after one year in office, he still does not know his responsibility? If the rules permitted I would move that the minister resign or that the wheat board be taken from his responsibility. There has been some talk about this.

I should like to hear any western member who supports the government suggest that the wheat board should remain the responsibility of this minister who has no knowledge of this situation. I should like to see the hon. member for Assiniboia (Mr. Douglas) cast his vote of confidence in support of this government's actions after listening to the speech the minister has made. I do not think he could do so and return to his constituency to face the farmers. I am sure no western member could do this because of the mishandling of this whole grain situation since the beginning of last fall. The minister has been inept in handling this problem since his appointment.

The *Western Producer* of January 2, 1969 published an article under the heading "France undercuts I.G.A. price". What is Canada doing about this? Has this government made any complaint? What is the minister doing? The hon. member for Assiniboia suggested that the farmers were prepared to sell for less. I suggest some farmers must sell for less because of high interest rates and because of the new estate taxes the government is introducing.

The minister asks us to consider what the government has done. It has increased taxes to farmers when they are alive and is now prepared to take their farms when they die. Perhaps when the government takes over these farms the Prime Minister will decide that now the government owns the farms it will have to sell the wheat. I suppose that will be the time the Prime Minister finally accepts responsibility for moving and selling wheat. Surely to goodness, in this democratic country we can expect more responsibility than that.