

Speech from the Throne

That is the situation as it is now. The report continues:

Mr. Nelson said another point coming to light on the Vancouver visit is that wheat board grain transportation mismanagement is leading to rail shipments of rye, flax and rapeseed being cut while the backlog of wheat is being made up.

That is the situation with regard to transportation as it was last week at the Vancouver port terminal. Yesterday, the minister told us how well things were going and last night the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Olson) spoke in the same vein in this debate—everything is fine but we have had a little snow trouble. However, that does not excuse the fact that the grain was not in storage to take care of this situation. I suggest to the minister that having found the discrepancies in the present policy, we now need to ensure that the terminal facilities are full. If anything we should increase the storage facility at the terminal positions.

There are indications across the country that we have actually over-sold our transportation capability in regard to grain. It would not matter if Canadian farmers produced and sold a billion and a half bushels, the transportation facilities could not move it to salt water. The railroads need more locomotives and a better servicing plan for them in order to keep them moving. An improved braking system is also needed. The best brains in the country should be looking into this and perhaps some of this so-called subsidy money should be used.

We are told that one hopper car costs in the neighbourhood of \$20,000. If the railroads cannot provide enough of this type of transportation, then maybe we should build them ourselves and rent them to the railroads. If we are to keep pace in the area of transportation we must look at our bulk port facilities and bulk carriers. Today, we are using the same type of boxcars and grain handling facilities that were used 50 years ago. The equipment must be able to cope with the situation today if it is to bring prosperity to Canada by enabling us to get the grain to market in greater quantities. We need such a system if we are to improve our economic position and our balance of payments position.

This government has indicated that it is emphasizing marketing, but some of us doubt whether this is actually being pursued and a priority placed upon it. There is a feeling that some of our embassies and trade commissions are not staffed by people well qualified as salesmen. I think that the day of the pleasant discussion at the cocktail hour has gone, and that every individual in our embassies and trade commissions should be assessed in regard to their understanding of the total Canadian trade picture and their capabilities as salesmen. This is our bread and butter in Canada but we seldom see any proof of their salesmanship or of what they are doing in regard to the marketing of grain. I should like to read into the record a letter which I have here. The name on the letterhead is Spanish, Central de Contracciones Comerciales, S.A. This is an agency which trades in grain on an international basis. The letter reads:

• (1440)

We have been in contact with the Alberta Wheat Pool, the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool, XCAN, and various other organizations in your country, and have never been able to get so much as a firm offer from anyone. We have written over a dozen letters to

[Mr. Downey.]

XCAN since January and they never have answered any of them. We have spent much on phone calls to them but to no avail.

In order to do business in Mexico, as well as in Canada, you must have a local agent. We were more or less promised the agency for XCAN but nothing ever came of it.

The main buyer for the Mexican Government is CONASUPO, who has bought over 220,000 MT of wheat since September. The prices have been in the range of \$63 to \$72 per MT. All has been sold by U.S. private companies principally Continental Grain and Cargill.

We have met personally with at least two of your country's trade missions, one from the Canadian Grain Council and another from the Rapeseed Association. From our point of view their visit was not useful because they have not taken advantage of the knowledge and contacts gained.

If you decide to come to Mexico, please plan to stay long enough to really study our market and learn the intricacies of doing business with a strongly centralized government.

Then, the letter continues. This is an indication, as we have long suspected, that our trade organizations in Canada are not going all out in an effort to see that Canadian grain is marketed. Surely, it is nothing short of disgusting that some of these organizations do not answer their mail, especially when it deals with a prime commodity in this country such as grain. While many of the organizations are private groups, I firmly believe it is up to the government to give some direction. Certainly, I am sure there must be people in this army of civil servants in this country who are very well aware of the situation which exists. I do not believe this is the first time they have heard of this situation.

There is another area into which I believe the government should be looking. I realize it involves a difficult problem and I know there are no easy answers. Also I do not wish to be critical. However, I believe, as Mr. Meany said a short time ago, that strikes have outlived their usefulness. Certainly this country has become strike-bound. One can hardly pick up a newspaper without reading about another strike. The prime objective of the government should be in this area. I believe there are indications that we would be better off if the unions in this country were exclusively Canadian. I believe the minister must be very well aware of the net outflow of funds in the form of union dues, over benefits accruing to union members, from this country every year. Certainly, directives come from the head offices of these unions which cannot be in the Canadian or national interest. I think this whole area should be reviewed.

Mr. Gilbert: What about exclusive Canadian corporations?

Mr. Downey: I think we should discuss both. International unions and international companies are part of the same problem. There is some indication certainly that permanent compulsory negotiating machinery should be set up. If this is not the case, I suggest laws should be enacted in this country to place a financial responsibility on unions when they strike against the general public interest. Financial responsibility should be placed on unions so that they would think twice before they struck against the public.

Yesterday I had occasion to bring forward a private bill on Canadian citizenship. There has been a good deal of divisive legislation passed and there have been many divisive comments made in this country in the past four years.