

*Feed Grain*

Mr. Wagner: True ones, and which we believe. However, this afternoon, when the emergency debate was agreed to by the Chair, the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Whelan) uttered a few words, shall I say so sweet, which were recorded and reported to the media, he said something like: "Why waste such a lovely evening?" So it was the prospect of that spring night which made him decide that he had better go and talk elsewhere than listen to hon. members and have the opportunity to act. I readily agree, Madam Speaker, that having lengthy debates will not help solve problems. However, it is surprising to get tonight from the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Corriveau) a series of figures, disclosures, and informations which we have been demanding in this House, day after day, for the last fifteen days, and it will have taken an emergency debate for us to get that information and to lead the Minister of Agriculture and the Minister of Labour (Mr. Munro) and others concerned to tell hon. members: what is the root of the crisis we are witnessing in Quebec?

Madam Speaker, I am surprised and I think to myself: the Minister of Agriculture may think he is lucky he escaped the questions and cross-examinations by members of Parliament tonight, but tomorrow when he reads *Hansard*, he might consider himself slightly less lucky since his cause was pleaded by the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mr. Ouellet). I must admit, Madam Speaker, it seemed a little bit strange. It seemed a bit strange to suddenly see the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs come to the rescue of the Minister of Agriculture, and in an outstanding display of solidarity take up his cause and make himself his spokesman. We were then reminded of the days of the old solidarity when, on the matter of eggs for instance, the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs made statements totally inconsistent with what he thought of the Minister of Agriculture's activities. So maybe he was just paying him back in his own currency when he was led tonight to plead so vehemently the cause of a man whose action he had unfortunately stigmatized several times in the past. In any case, Madam Speaker, lucky or not, the minister will have the opportunity tomorrow to read everything that was said and to draw his own conclusions.

I would not like to forget to welcome particularly the speech of the hon. member for Verdun (Mr. Mackasey). Members for Verdun have a very special way of saying things, they are vigorous and I see that the former as well as the present members for Verdun do not change, for the well-being of Canadian society.

Madam Speaker, I would now like to say that my colleagues have showed firmness to this moment, in particular my colleague from Vancouver South (Mr. Fraser), who depicted very clearly the disaster of which Quebec farmers are now the victims. The supply of feed grain is disrupted to such an extent that Quebec farmers are forced to send their cattle and poultry prematurely to the slaughterhouse. Soon this premature slaughtering will upset the whole market, which is already so unstable, very soon production costs, already too high, will be accordingly increased and once more, consumers will pay the bill. However costly and dramatic the present Quebec longshoremen strike may be, and however costly it may be for cattle or poultry producers, I do not intend to blame the

longshoremen alone for the feed grain shortage in the province of Quebec.

I know what were the recommendations of Mr. Justice Gold. I am particularly aware of this clause 1.09 of the Gold report which says, and I quote:

The operation of any rented equipment, unless otherwise specified, is a duty that does not fall on longshoremen.

I also know that a new mobile hour system is proposed which may jeopardize at least to a certain extent the job security of longshoremen in Montreal, Trois-Rivières and Quebec City.

But since the longshoremen by going on a legitimate strike have succeeded in making the governments of Ottawa and Quebec and the general public aware of the problem, and that, with the same intensity, as pointed out by the hon. member for Richelieu (Mr. Côté) the opposition has succeeded in waking up the government by having this special debate, I ask them, and I hope that members of the government side will support me, I ask the longshoremen and all my colleagues on this side as well to take concrete and immediate action and to facilitate the free and efficient access to grain elevators to the recognized representatives of co-operatives and millers of the province of Quebec. I hope this appeal will be heard. Otherwise, the longshoremen would only compel Parliament to adopt, for lack of other means, a special legislation to force them back to work.

● (2300)

Madam Speaker, I feel that it would be appropriate at this time to remind all those concerned that the right to strike has reached its limit when it starts to interfere with the rights of others, with the collective right of a whole community.

Let the federal government, because of the urgency of the situation, make use of the means of pressure at its disposal and, should the need arise, make use of his legislative weapons, if the longshoremen refuse to demonstrate themselves their concern for the true interest of the people. Producers and consumers cannot and must not remain 24 hours more the hostages of ship owners and dockers who have refused far too long to listen to one another.

Why don't the union members concerned make a similar gesture, comparable to the one they made earlier in this strike; thus, it seems to me the unions would stand to gain, to win new favour—and God knows they need it at this time!—and so all the freedoms could be saved, in the best interests of society.

To conclude, essentially, this conflict and the dire effects it has already had on our farmers, and will soon have on consumers generally, raise the problem, the challenge of assuming, with maturity and in a civilized way, the choice and exercise of our freedoms in Canada.

In the short run, the government must expedite recourse to the means at its disposal, and if need be, resort to an actual rail lift from Thunder Bay to Montreal, and an actual truck lift from Prescott to Eastern Quebec, to make up for present shortages of feed grains and, eventually, if the quality of the stocks now locked up for some time in