

Feed Grain

of railway transportation to the East. I heard representations by those responsible for purchasing at the Coopérative Agricole Papineau. Since last January, railway transportation of grain to the East has been extremely limited, and I am asking the Minister of Agriculture to make the necessary representations to whom it may concern. Sometimes, Mr. Speaker, I get the impression that the authorities of the Canadian Wheat Board do not consider consumption important for the domestic market. I know that foreign markets are very important for Western wheat producers, but I believe that the priority must be given to domestic consumers. I join my colleague for Portneuf (Mr. Bussièrès) and the hon. member for Bellechasse (Mr. Lambert) in asking the minister to give more power to the Canadian Livestock Feed Board. Mr. Speaker, I have made this suggestion several times in the past and I know that it will not be welcome among Western members. But we Easterners want the Canadian Livestock Feed Board to have more power to ensure a regular supply for Eastern livestock producers.

Therefore, I would like to suggest to the Minister of Agriculture that he seriously consider the increased costs that the present situation will bring about for livestock producers, and I hope that if he needs any help from members on the government side to support his requests from the President of the Treasury Board or the Cabinet we shall be behind him so that he may offset in one way or another the additional cost that Quebec cattle producers will have to bear because of the present situation.

Let me make a further suggestion which was made to me by someone who deals in feed grain because mention is often made of millers, even in the motion of the hon. member for Bellechasse. Not only are millers experiencing difficulties in obtaining supplies of feed grain, but cooperatives as well. One of the suggestions made by a representative of a very important cooperative on the Quebec side of the Ottawa Valley is that the government should perhaps seriously consider building regional storage facilities which could be supplied by rail. Among others, I think of the Coopérative Agricole Papineau which has its headquarters and plant in Plaisance. Since it is located west of Montreal, it would be much more economic for it to get its supplies by rail—the Canadian Pacific serves our area—if we had such a warehouse in our area.

In conclusion, I join with all the members who have already participate in this debate to urge once again the parties involved in this labour dispute affecting the three ports I mentioned to carry on serious negotiations around a table and arrived at a settlement soon, so that our Quebec producers will be normally supplied with feed grain.

Mr. Gilbert Rondeau (Shefford): Mr. Speaker, I must warmly congratulate my colleague, the hon. member for Bellechasse (Mr. Lambert) as the previous speakers have done it, for his excellent job in proposing to the House a motion under Standing Order 26 in order to discuss this urgent matter of feed grain supplies and in particular the strike now going on in the province of Quebec.

I think that every member of this House is prepared to congratulate the hon. member for Bellechasse. First because he himself is a farmer and as such, is deeply concerned by the problem of agriculture of which he has a

[Mr. Clermont.]

thorough knowledge. Since we have had the opportunity of taking advantage of his knowledge in this House, we have been able to appreciate his devotion and concern over this matter in the committee on agriculture.

However, I heard my hon. colleagues tonight and this afternoon try to take the credit that the hon. member for Bellechasse deserves for putting this motion forward. Things have been said on the Progressive Conservative side by the hon. member for Joliette (Mr. La Salle) and on the government side through the question asked by the hon. member for Bonaventure-Îles-de-la-Madeleine (Mr. Béchard), who pretended to be the first one to raise the matter yesterday when he asked a question to the right hon. Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau). I invite the hon. member for Frontenac-Lennox and Addington (Mr. Alkenbrack) to check in *Hansard* where he will see, on page 4651 of the Debates of House of Commons of April 9, that the hon. member for Bellechasse was the first one to raise this matter of the strike in the ports of Quebec City, Montreal and Trois-Rivières. On page 4651 of *Hansard*—and I shall not read again the motion he has put forward in its whole—he said and I quote:

Mr. Speaker, pursuant to the provisions of Standing Order 26, I request that an emergency debate be held on the feed grain supply in eastern Canada, and more particularly in Quebec.

And he listed all the effects of this strike that had been going on for more than 7 days and has worsened from day-to-day.

Yet, the hon. member for Bonaventure-Îles-de-la-Madeleine tries to take the credit that the hon. member for Bellechasse entirely deserves. I remember quite well that in 1962 when we arrived in this House as a result of the general election of 1962, we raised for the first time the feed grain issue in Eastern Canada.

I remember quite well that the government of that time, day after day, week after week, promised to come up with a solution and now, in 1975, we are still at grips with the same problem. After 13 years, the situation is exactly the same. There is still no solution. We heard pious wishes from all sides and I do not know how many Ministers of Agriculture made promises though we are still facing the same problem today. This is an important issue which threatens our economy and Canadian consumers and tonight we heard some interesting comments from government members. For instance, I liked the comments made by the hon. member for Lapointe (Mr. Marceau) who did not simply state: I have confidence in the minister and he will solve the whole problem in due time. He asked instead for immediate measures and we fully agree with him.

● (0230)

I also support the comments of the hon. member for Portneuf (Mr. Bussièrès) who said that there should not be any problem for a government which can use an airplane overnight to move food products to the Western world or to Bangladesh. Why could it not move food products from Western Canada to the port of Montreal or to the farm cooperative of Granby or to any farm centre in Eastern Canada?

Mr. Speaker, there are members who have been kind to the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Whelan), as if they were afraid to expose themselves.