

Grain

I believe also that the Canadian Wheat Board should be extremely flexible in designating shipping areas for both eastern and western shipments. If it can be shown that there is a shortage of grain cars, and I do not believe this has been proven, this should be quickly rectified by a transport controller. The future of our grain industry, which is so important to the economy of the whole nation, depends on whether or not we can cope with the current problems and whether we can develop methods to prevent their recurrence. The importance of maintaining Canada's reputation as a reliable producer and supplier of wheat cannot be over-emphasized.

Mr. J. H. Horner (Crowfoot): Mr. Speaker, a little while ago we witnessed a defence of the Wheat Board and the grain handling system which would have sickened any farmer from western Canada. It would have sickened the farmers there and have driven them to despair. I rise at this time, heavy of heart, because I realize the many difficulties with which the minister is confronted and his inability to cope with those difficulties. I have nothing particular against the minister but he is unsuited to handle the grain problems in western Canada. I notice the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) in the house at this time. Let me remind the house of his remarks during the campaign. He said he would appoint ministers to his cabinet not on the basis of regional representation but because of ability. Surely the Prime Minister cannot sit in his seat today and tell us the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce (Mr. Pepin) was appointed to look after the wheat board because of his ability, particularly after his 20 minute speech of nonsense and garbage.

● (9:40 p.m.)

At one time the Minister of Trade and Commerce, during his speech, asked what his job was. He suggested that we should tell him what to do. He should not have been appointed if he did not know what to do or what his job entailed. Surely every farmer in western Canada could quickly tell him what his job is and what he should do. His job is to sell wheat and move it as quickly as possible. He should not take the attitude the Prime Minister expressed in Winnipeg some time ago and again in the House of Commons when he asked, why should the government sell wheat?

[Mr. Douglas.]

The minister should sell wheat because the wheat board is a branch of the government functioning on behalf of farmers. The government has accepted the responsibility to govern this country, and whether the Prime Minister wants that responsibility—and I am sometimes unsure about that—he has accepted it now. He went out and worked to acquire that responsibility. He now says that the selling of wheat is the farmer's problem and would only become a government responsibility if the state owned the land and hired the farmers to produce wheat. Perhaps the Prime Minister is like the Minister of Trade and Commerce who is now wondering what his job is. We all wondered what his job was when he was over in London, but now that he is back here in Canada he should recognize his responsibility and at least attempt to cope with this situation.

The Minister of Trade and Commerce outlined the problem but at no time did he say what the government was doing about it. He did not say we are doing "a", "b" or "c" about it, or this is what we hope to do. He attempted to throw this problem off his shoulders by saying the problem was the result of the production of tough and damp grain last fall and the railroad companies were having problems hauling the grain in the winter-time. We have had a cold winter this year in western Canada, but this is not the first cold winter and it will not be the last. The minister also blamed the situation on the fact that there was an unusually high demand for western wheat at the western ports. During the last few years Vancouver has moved over 50 per cent of the grain moved in this country, and if the minister doubts that he should look up the records. The minister went on to suggest that the farmers had asked for a 3 cent per bushel advance on damp grain, and said this got the government into trouble. He finally analyzed the problem by saying, or rather asking, what is my job?

Mr. Woolliams: It is obvious he doesn't know.

Mr. Horner: He doesn't know and he is not even prepared to find out. He has been the minister for one year, yet he does not know what his job is. There are 33 ships at Vancouver today, some being loaded and some not. The Prime Minister makes flippant remarks, but who is paying the demurrage charges on these ships which amounts to \$2,-500 per day? Let me tell you that the farmers