

Ways and Means

Maple Creek has brought it to the attention of the House. The hon. Member for Rosthern and the hon. Member for Assiniboia have done the same thing. Only yesterday I referred to a telegram sent to the Minister of Trade and Commerce and questioned him about this matter. In reply he said the situation was under control. However, we do not see evidence of the necessary action being taken.

● (7:00 p.m.)

The Wheat Board is involved, but the Board, as an agency of the Government, has to get some direction and assistance from the Government. So I make an urgent plea to the Government at the present time to give this matter serious attention. I hope that some of the Ministers who are now present will bring it to the attention of their colleagues who are directly concerned because it is most important that the C.N.R. and the C.P.R. should rush cars into these areas.

There is one other matter. A number of farmers in western Canada have been receiving registered letters from the Wheat Board with respect to the balance of payments of their cash advances. Understandably this is a source of great annoyance to these farmers, who cannot pay the balances, due to the difficulty they find in getting their grain to market. They should not be receiving these dunning notes. There need be no concern about the collection of these advances because, under the Act, the permit books of the farmers concerned are held by the elevators and when they are allowed to bring their grain to market the advances will automatically be collected. I think the Minister responsible for the Wheat Board should discuss this matter with the Board to see whether the issuance of such letters cannot be held in abeyance until cars have been placed at the disposal of the elevators in western Canada to get the grain off the farms.

This is a serious problem in western Canada, particularly in southeastern Saskatchewan and the western side of Manitoba, and the Government should give it urgent consideration.

Resolution reported and concurred in.

WAYS AND MEANS**INTERIM SUPPLY**

The house in Committee of Ways and Means, Mr. Lamoureux in the Chair.

Mr. Gordon moved:

Resolved, that toward making good the Supply granted to Her Majesty on account of certain ex-
[Mr. Southam.]

penses of the public services for the fiscal year ending 31 March 1966, the sum of \$1,651,292,282.42 be granted out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund of Canada.

Mr. Knowles: May I ask the Secretary of State for External Affairs just one question? Does he intend to reply to the remarks made earlier this afternoon by the hon. Member for Greenwood with respect to the current proposal for the amending of the British North America Act?

Let me put my question this way: Is this all there is to it? Is the fact that there has been an opportunity to discuss the matter—whether there has been very much discussion or not—all that is necessary? The Government sends the amendment over and the constitution is amended—is it as simple as that?

Mr. Martin (Essex East): Yes, it is as simple as that. The Government, as the adviser to Her Majesty the Queen, has a responsibility which it will exercise as we have already indicated. This advice will be that the matter forwarded to us by the Lieutenant Governor, for the Government of the Province of Quebec is in respect of a matter which the Government of Canada believes to be a matter of a local character within the terms of the constitution.

I made a statement the other day as to the course we propose to follow. The Prime Minister had indicated that notwithstanding the responsibility of the executive, within the limitations I have indicated, the Government would not finally give this favourable advice to Her Majesty until such time as this House had been given the opportunity to express individual opinions. This opportunity has been given.

The Government takes the position that this is not a matter for the Parliament of Canada. This is a matter which does not concern the laws of Canada, the Parliament of Canada, or the provinces. This is a matter which affects the province concerned alone. For that reason the course I have already outlined will be followed.

Mr. Knowles: I have no intention of extending this discussion, but I think it should be on record that some of us do not feel this is the proper course. If the Government proposes to go ahead and do it just because there has been this little bit of discussion, there is nothing we can do to stop it. But it does not accord with the views which some of us hold about the importance of our consti-