

*Grain Shipments*

tion reached an impasse and strike action was approved. From then on the Pacific seaboard was shut down tight. Is it any wonder that we want to debate this issue tonight?

During the ruckus last fall, the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) sent a telegram to the president of the United Grain Growers and said that the present settlement should not be considered a precedent for wage settlements in other sectors of the economy because the men in that dispute were trying to catch up with the longshoremen. We now know that that was utter nonsense. As I said before, the government started the problem on the Pacific seaboard last year with an effective settlement of 54.2 per cent. The government's own employees are asking for much less.

Why could we not have settled long ago and got the workers back to work? Why cannot Treasury Board start negotiating contracts before they expire? It seems to me that the government is purposely screwing up the country. We must remember that the Japanese are shrewd buyers. They are in a falling market now and they are rubbing their hands. As I say, farmer after farmer has written to me suggesting that as a first step in a solution we should get rid of the minister in charge of the Canadian Wheat Board.

During the ruckus last fall the minister in charge of the Wheat Board said, "Let us get grain moving again". That was the big thrust. Last fall we were in a rising market and producers were able to recoup some of their losses. The present situation is much more serious and harmful. Grain prices are falling. There is high-seeded acreage in the United States. Rapeseed is down \$2 a bushel, wheat is down from \$1 to \$1.50 a bushel, and do not be misled by the asking price of the Canadian Wheat Board. When you are not able to deliver anything it does not matter what your asking price is. When we start to deliver, the price is going to be down \$1 or \$1.50 a bushel.

● (0230)

Farm organizations in the United States are asking for production controls. That shows how optimistic they are. This will add up to millions of dollars in lost sales and millions more because of a falling market.

The hon. member for Assiniboia (Mr. Goodale) mentioned a Saskatchewan Wheat Pool publication, and I should like to refer to it briefly. In the words of the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool, which is the largest grain handling company in the country, provincial wide anger and frustration are growing as farmers see the devastating effects on our whole Canadian economy. Well attended meetings without exception expressed concern, particularly regarding grain sales lost, and revenue lost to producers. They urged the federal government to invoke measures to send the workers back and have the negotiations continue.

The Saskatchewan pool wants an impartial board established to get the workers back first. It says we are seriously testing the loyalty of our overseas customers, and the organization would welcome the calling of a general conference of industry, labour and government to determine a means to improve collective bargaining in Canada. That is a good suggestion for the government. I do not think anyone should have the right to strike in essential ser-

[Mr. Hamilton (Swift Current-Maple Creek).]

vices. As I said before, there should be a start to bargaining before agreements expire.

**Mr. Bert Hargrave (Medicine Hat):** Mr. Speaker, I want to say at the outset that I appreciate the appropriate remarks of the hon. member for Swift Current-Maple Creek (Mr. Hamilton) about our friends in the gallery tonight, and I echo his sentiments. I want to assure the House tonight that I will be brief, but I intend to make a specific comment that is somewhat personal, relating to the fact that last week I had the privilege of attending three farm meetings, two of which were in my constituency of Medicine Hat. They were good rural meetings. One was held at Bow Island and one at Burdett, small towns west of Medicine Hat. The third meeting was in Swift Current, Saskatchewan, in the constituency of the hon. member for Swift Current-Maple Creek.

At these meetings I had many personal contacts with farmers, and almost the only topic they wished to hear about and discuss was the one we are debating tonight, namely, the complete tie-up of grain handling facilities in western Canada, and particularly those on the west coast. These farmers were annoyed, frustrated, and in fact completely infuriated at the complete lack of action by the government here in Ottawa. I am relating their reaction rather than my own feelings.

These farmers were well informed as to what these tie-ups have cost them in a personal way. They were well informed, for example, about the 15,000 boxcars full of grain scattered on sidings all the way from the shipping points on the prairies out to the west coast. They were well informed about the incredible demurrage charges that every prairie grain grower must help to pay, and they were informed about the dissatisfaction of foreign customers at late or non-deliveries. They are very much aware of these facts and of the shrinking reputation of Canada throughout the world as an on-schedule supplier of quality products.

These same farmers told me in no uncertain terms what they thought of the situation. Most of them went even further, and said forcefully what they thought of the increases that have been suggested. In their opinion these increases were not justified. Their message to me was very clear. They said to get the grain moving again immediately, and not allow any more exorbitant settlements such as the one that grew out of the Perry Report last fall. You must admit this is a tall order for any group to fill in the atmosphere that exists at this time.

Just a week ago a delegation of the Palliser Wheat Growers' Association visited the various grain handling agencies and facilities on the west coast. They were told that as soon as the longshoremen go back to work the grain handlers are ready to go out on strike once again because management has not yet signed the contract that came from that Perry Report settlement last fall. Surely that is a rather frightening outlook.

The same delegation reported that these two groups, the longshoremen and the grain handlers, are about to amalgamate into one union to increase their bargaining power.

I seriously question if government members are truly aware of just how serious this grain situation is. Let us give these prairie farmers some credit for knowing their