

Feed Grain

and the *John Misner*, carrying 270,000 bushels of grain also. These two ships could dock at any port, depending on the regional situation.

In Thunder Bay, the number of cars loaded with grain increases from day to day. There will be a meeting tomorrow to discuss the possibility of further increasing the number of cars loaded each day.

The railway companies have promised the government at least 300 cars at Thunder Bay, if the situation so requires. In addition, they promised cars coming from Ontario loaded with feed grain to be delivered in Quebec.

According to another rumour, it is more costly to move grain from Thunder Bay to the province of Quebec by rail than by boat. According to the figures of the Department of Agriculture, this is not the case. We should also consider the transportation costs accrued between the port of Thunder Bay and the Quebec mills.

As a rule, people forget there are transportation costs from the elevators to the mills. After a comprehensive study, one finds that transportation costs are often the same.

In brief, the government is aware of the circumstances and recognizes there is a problem which might become rather serious. The government took some measures to help farmer and provide further assistance. Exaggerated rumours do not help to solve such a problem. The Minister of Agriculture said in this House that he would not let the livestock die. He has devoted all his energies to this matter up to now, and I do not see what could prevent him from keeping on working in the same direction.

Madam Speaker, when one says that the government has been inactive and has done nothing, I feel that time should be taken to have a good look at what the government has been able to accomplish at the present time, not with a view to trying and interfere with the settlement of the strike, but rather trying and understand the trade unionists as well as the farmers. I feel that all government members who have spoken tonight have not tried, as was well evidenced a while ago, to play a game on two levels, that on a given day, people are visited in a region and encouraged to strike, and on the following day, they are visited in another region and told: The government should legislate, the government should adopt special legislation, the government should do this or that. Madam Speaker, I believe that the government has taken a totally different course of action.

An hon. Member: That's easy to say.

Mr. Corriveau: Necessarily these are very practical matters. I was saying earlier that we had stopped a ship at Prescott to be able to supply eastern Canada. The railway companies have promised to make more cars available to the government if necessary. These cars shall be available at Thunder Bay and in Ontario, as required. A meeting will be held tomorrow in Thunder Bay to discuss the possibility of increasing the number of car loads to be shipped to Quebec. A meeting will take place with the province of Ontario, on the possibility of issuing special regulations for the Quebec flour-mill trucks that are to load supplies in the port of Prescott. There is at the present time an agreement with the Quebec government,

[Mr. Corriveau.]

with the Minister of Transport, allowing truckers to move grain so that they will not be limited to half loads. Tomorrow, the government will get in touch with the Ontario government, and ask for the same privileges. Contacts have already been established. Millers from Ontario co-operatives are allowed to carry full loads on the Ontario Highways, but a law was passed recently that does not allow other trucks than those belonging to co-operative millers to move very heavy loads on the Ontario highways. This will be discussed at a meeting between the federal government and the Ontario government and, Madam Speaker, I am under the impression that the Eastern Quebec producers will be listened to. I have tried to give an account which provide perhaps a clearer idea of the situation in Quebec. The farmer from Saint-Hyacinthe (Mr. Wagner), is going to speak.

Mr. Claude Wagner (Saint-Hyacinthe): Madam Speaker, I can hear the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Corriveau) say: The farmer from Saint-Hyacinthe is going to speak.

It would be doing me great honour to credit me with the qualities, the attributes of Saint-Hyacinthe farmers. I admit however that my experience in agriculture, my knowledge of agricultural problems is in inverse ratio to the distress I feel about the problems affecting farmers of Saint-Hyacinthe. So, Madam Speaker, it is with very great pleasure that I shall take part briefly in the debate, remembering that at the outset, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister or the chief whip, the hon. member for Pontiac (Mr. Lefebvre), if I am not mistaken, said on a point of order that the matter under consideration is a national problem.

● (2250)

And he is right. The problem is of national importance—which may perhaps explain the absence of almost the whole cabinet from this House tonight—and a problem to which no hon. member should be indifferent. It is of national importance, and so much so that not only has the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Stanfield) been sitting in his seat here since the start of the debate, but representatives of all the provinces of Canada on the opposition side will have the opportunity of making themselves heard, of pleading the case of the Quebec millers and of saying openly to the government that, to them, this is not a problem of secondary importance, and that when there is a crisis in Quebec they are so deeply concerned that they are moved to champion the cause of the people, the consumers and the farmers of Quebec.

It is with special gratitude, therefore, Madam Speaker, that I address my thanks to the hon. member of Bellechasse (Mr. Lambert) and the hon. member for Joliette (Mr. La Salle) for having moved this debate, for having assumed their responsibilities and having made heard the voice of the opposition.

Madam Speaker, concern has been expressed about the absence of the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Whelan). Some elements of explanation have been provided.

Mr. Corriveau: And true ones.