

Government Orders

I want to put this on the record because this is really the issue that we are dealing with. What we are dealing with right now is the immediate crisis in the grain industry, the immediate crisis that farmers are having. In the long term we need a solution to the problems that are becoming more and more obvious to us all. What they would like the minister to look at in this industrial inquiry commission is: (a) outstanding bargaining issues currently in dispute between the Transportation Communications Union and the Lakehead Terminal Elevators; (b) upon settlement of the current labour dispute, the commission would then examine matters that will affect industrial relations, including future negotiations between the TCU Lodge and the Lakehead terminal employers. One is the effect of reduced grain handling through the port of Thunder Bay. Two is the effect of decline in grain prices for prairie commodities. Three is the effect of technological change. And four where they would like to consider the elevator's consolidation.

• (1130)

This is very important because, as I said at the very beginning of my intervention, we have lost a total of 1,000 jobs in Thunder Bay since 1984. You can understand how the people in Thunder Bay feel about this particular issue right now, not just the employees, but all the people who are associated with the city of Thunder Bay.

I think it would be very much appropriate for the minister, once we have dealt with this piece of legislation today, to take a look at this particular request by the union, which is really a request by the city of Thunder Bay, to get an understanding of where we are going in this country as it relates to grain handling. Is it going to be a fact, as a lot of people in Thunder Bay think, that most of the grain in this country is going to be shipped from the west coast? Is it true? If it is true, let us be up front about where we are going with this and say to the employees and their families in the city of Thunder Bay that in the long term, the next 10 or 15 or 20 years, this is what we envision the structure of grain shipments in this country will look like.

If we think that this particular piece of legislation by the minister and the government of the day is going to

rectify the issues that are before us in the city of Thunder Bay and across Canada, we really are whistling in the dark.

I am suggesting to the minister and to the government that we have to look at both these issues. One, in the short term, is the arbitration panel that I have suggested in order to talk about some of these issues that the city of Thunder Bay and its employees and employers are talking about, and also the application for the inquiry to the minister to look at the over-all issue in general of this particular industry.

Having said all that, I would urge the government to realize, first and foremost, that this side is not very appreciative of this particular piece of legislation because it does walk all over the whole process of collective bargaining, but we, in essence, when all is said and done, will support this legislation because we believe that the crisis situation will not be helped in the short term by delaying the legislation, but in the long term, we emphasize we would like to see some process put in place that will be fair to all sides and especially to the city of Thunder Bay so that this situation will not happen as a regular occurrence.

Mr. Rod Murphy (Churchill): Madam Speaker, I, too, wish to speak on this back to work legislation. In starting out, I would like to point out to the minister that we have been co-operative to-day in that we have allowed him to waive notice and to start this debate without the usual 48 hour notice that is required under the House rules.

I want to, in retrospect, make it very clear that we are not stalling this legislation but, on the other hand, we do not believe in giving the government a blank cheque.

I was somewhat disturbed to hear that the Liberal Party will vote for this legislation and I was very disturbed to find out that one of the Winnipeg members of the Liberal caucus said that they would support the legislation even before they saw it. The one thing I have learned with this Prime Minister and this government is you never give them a blank cheque. I just do not trust the government and I think there are a number of reasons in recent history why many, many Canadians do not trust this government and would certainly not wish to give it a blank cheque.