

*Grain*

years, and two years of an excess of rain. For eight or ten years a farmer may have to use drying equipment on only one or two occasions. We cannot afford this situation in regard to our elevator arrangements.

When we went out to western Canada I am sure every member of the committee was shocked when he learned something that probably even the farmers do not know. When we walked into the Moose Jaw terminal we found it had in it less than 20 bushels of grain. This had been the situation for many months. They had 40 employees. If each of them had taken one bushel of grain home, that elevator would not have been needed at all. That terminal facility could be putting class II wheat into export shape for marketing in three or four days. All you would be doing at the elevators, either at the head of the lakes or in Vancouver, would be moving the grain into the ships that were tied up in that area. The necessity this year for drying grain as well as for putting it into export position has made things much more difficult. The situation could have been coped with much more easily in the terminal elevators than the elevators at the ports.

● (1:10 a.m.)

As everyone knows, there has been great reluctance to use the port at Churchill. The facilities at Churchill could have been used to a far greater degree for European export of wheat, probably three or four times as much. This recommendation has been made by all transportation people in the Churchill area. They have said that if grain were moved to the port at Churchill the cost would be less than in moving it to other ports. Yet this was not considered until an emergency arose.

I suggest to the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce that he set up the commission which has been recommended. He has the choice of either setting up a commission to co-ordinate the transportation or one to handle the whole co-ordination of the grain movement. The grain commissioners have a responsibility in this field, as have the country elevators and the Wheat Board. It is difficult for each and every one of them to be in contact with each other. For instance, I am told tonight that there has been another bad train wreck in the Edmonton area. If this is so, these shipments could be rerouted by a transportation commissioner with teletype facilities in his office. He would know the movements of the C.N.R. and C.P.R. and could make appropriate arrangements.

[Mr. Peters.]

If we do not have such a facility I suggest we will be in continual difficulty. The facilities we do have are archaic and we should seriously consider what to do about this problem on a long term basis. Everyone concerned with the industry and with agriculture has done a very good job in their own field to make possible the deliveries that we have made over the last four or five years. This is a unique year because of the drying problem. There is also a general problem in the field of agriculture which is developing very rapidly. I refer to the high interest rate on purchases which the farmers have to make. Obviously this has had some effect on the ability of country elevators to buy drying equipment. So there have been special problems this year.

If the minister considers himself big enough to sit on this whole problem he will find himself in exactly the same situation as the one which his great predecessor, C. D. Howe, had to face. He was not big enough and he had to obtain the help of other competent people. If the minister wishes to call these people executives and appoint them to his own staff in charge of specific aspects of this problem I would not be opposed to such a move because I believe it would get the job done. But if he waits until each of these boards reports to him and carries out the work of co-ordination on the basis of those reports he will find he is considerably out of touch.

This problem has been with us for a number of years and until Members of Parliament get up and make a noise nothing ever seems to be done. The present situation has developed to some degree during every one of the 12 years in which I have been here, and I think the Minister of Agriculture will bear this out. Nothing new has been said in this debate. There is no emergency with which we are unfamiliar. For God's sake let us sit down in the agricultural committee and settle some of these problems or at least those which are capable of solution.

I do not say these things in a partisan way. The object is to maintain as much of the export market as we can, and this involves not only supplying the desired grain in the proper condition but supplying it on time to fill the ships as they arrive. It means that grain should be moved uniformly so that all farmers have an appropriate quota and so that no dislocation arises in connection with our transportation or harbour facilities. The