

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Chairman: Order, please. I think the point that the hon. member raises is really a matter of argument. The hon. member for Crowfoot may argue one way and the hon. member for Moose Jaw may argue another way. The hon. member for Crowfoot.

Some hon. Members: Question.

Mr. Horner: Mr. Chairman, what about the rule of relevancy? What about the rule on the expenditure of money? This amendment could cause the expenditure of money and such an amendment is only supposed to be moved by a member of the Cabinet. In any case, I notice that there is some general opinion that the House is ready to vote on this motion so I will not hold it up for more than about another two minutes.

• (1200)

The hon. member for Moose Jaw suggests that what I said about the head of the international union is false or wrong. If I had known he was such a doubting Thomas, I would have brought some newspaper clippings with me. On August 11, the beginning of the strike, the minister in charge of the Canadian Wheat Board said there was no worry, no strike and the grain handlers in the International Longshoremens Union would continue to work. The grain handlers intended to continue moving grain, but the head of the International Longshoremens Union, whose head office is in Los Angeles, stated quite categorically that he would not allow them to move Canadian grain. Perhaps he wanted more traffic to move through the port of Seattle which is south of Vancouver. Perhaps that is what motivated him. I really do not know.

It is high time that we examined the whole question of unions. This legislation deals with two international unions, one with its head office in Chicago and the other with its head office in Los Angeles. They control the economy of a great part of western Canada. If this amendment is in order, surely the government will accept it, set up the inquiry and decide whether Canada could have its own union which would have a responsibility to the economy of Canada and not to some foreign empire builders who control the unions. I believe that this amendment is out of order, but as Your Honour has ruled it to be in order, I am prepared to vote for it.

Mr. Skoberg: Mr. Chairman, in view of the type of discussion that went on last night and this morning, perhaps I should explain a little more what this amendment is all about. I wish to ask the minister to clarify the actions which the government has taken and also what action the Canadian Grains Council has taken with regard to settling some of these long-term disputes at the ports between management and labour.

It was interesting to listen to the labour spokesman for the official opposition, the hon. member for Hamilton West, dealing with the strike which exists in British Columbia today. Surely, this committee is concerned with the long-term effects of all strike. Surely we can make suggestions and amendments to take care of the long time, situation that exists. All this amendment does is set a deadline as to when this government should take action

West Coast Ports Operations Bill

or initiate an inquiry. This type of action should be supported by every member of this House in order to clarify some of the problems that exist.

I wish to refer to three areas where the longshoremen have come up with separate agreements and separate contracts to look after situations on the west coast. I refer to the Burlington Northern, the National Harbours Board and Roberts Bank. They are working in Roberts Bank today. If grain were taken out of the general cargo classification, there is no question but that grain would be moving through that terminal.

There are many areas of dispute about which management, particularly the elevator operators at the port of Vancouver, have no concern. If the hon. member for Crowfoot is going to make an accusation about who wanted to unload the cargo, I suggest that he do a little more homework. The people from the hiring and despatch hall are not the ones who say what cargo will be loaded and from where. It is disgraceful for a member of this House to attack unions without looking at the entire picture.

A grain group was set up by the minister in charge of the Canadian Wheat Board. Surely, this group should have looked at the overall problem. It is the responsibility of the Minister of Labour or the minister in charge of the wheat board to tell this House whether they are, in fact, looking at a long-term solution. The minister of Labour is not listening. Maybe I had better wait a minute. Can the minister inform this House whether the whole area of taking grain out of general cargoes, as was the case when other commodities were taken out of master agreements, has been considered in the light of the discussions we had last evening and this morning?

All the amendment does is ask the government to initiate an inquiry. It does not direct how the inquiry should be undertaken. We cannot expect the people engaged in this industry to worry about public sentiment and so on. They have to know where they stand. We cannot be expected to pass legislation which compels people to return to work when there is more than one side to the picture. The press invariably gives attention to the union and not the employer or the government. The government may have an answer as to why an inquiry should not be instituted and why grain should not be taken out of general cargo. I would appreciate some response from the minister. Perhaps the government has already done this. If so, I will withdraw my motion.

I cannot understand why anyone in this House would not support an amendment such as this. I was amazed to hear the hon. member for Crowfoot say today that he cannot support the amendment when last night he said he would support it. It seems strange that we cannot resolve some of the differences that have been in question for years and years with no foreseeable solution.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. O'Connell: With all respect, Mr. Chairman, I believe that this bill, which is designed to bring about the resumption of operations in the ports on the west coast, is not the place to introduce an amendment concerning the long-term problem of grain handling at those ports. This is to resume operations at those ports.