

*Government Orders*

They did it because of the situation they are in. They did it because the government was not acting. The government was not moving.

Now I hear that the government has announced something. I wish I had the details. I hope it comes some way in helping farmers through this very difficult period. But I can tell you this: All the emergency aid in the world is not the ultimate answer. I say this because we have an unbelievably vicious trade war going on out there over subsidies. Until we deal with that situation, we will not find a resolution to some of the major problems facing farmers.

With respect to the legislation, my good friend from Kenora—Rainy River has already spoken to the specific issues. He has put those issues on the record and has spoken eloquently. I think the House better understands the situation as a result of his presentation a few minutes ago.

I want to say that I find these situations difficult because I wish collective bargaining would do the job. I wish that we MPs did not have to involve ourselves the way we have. We have done this a number of times. Just recently we did it in the month of June and that had to do with the work stoppage in Vancouver.

I do not like the way the system is working. I believe in collective bargaining. We give people the right to strike, we give them certain rights and privileges. They use them for whatever reason, and then because of the impact on the farm community in this case or on the economy, we yank those rights away. We unfortunately do not have any choice in this particular case. We don't have any choice but I think the system needs improvement. I said it in June and I will say it again, we have to examine this system and see if we can come up with improvements. It creates all kinds of tensions and I don't really think that we are the experts, are we? We are not the experts. We are here to lay down policy, to enact laws, and after that it is up to the parties involved to work out what is best for them.

I really urge the government to look at this in a very, very serious way, because we need improvement.

Our labour critic, the member for Kenora—Rainy River, talked about amending the legislation. He talked about the need for an arbitration panel consisting of representatives from labour and management and a

neutral third party. To me, certainly on the surface, that makes a lot of sense. If you have a three party panel, you have expertise from a labour point of view and expertise from a management point of view. Then you have a third neutral objective person who can perhaps bring it all together, and bring about a settlement satisfactory to both parties.

When the bill goes to the Committee of the Whole, I hope this is something that can be examined in detail. I think that it has a lot of merit, certainly on the surface.

My final remarks, and again it is from an agricultural perspective, have to do with the current situation on the farm. Yes, we support the legislation because there is no choice. We have got to get the grain moving. Just minutes ago a farm package was announced and there may be some help there for the farmers. But we have got to get the grain moving. It has to go through the Lakehead. It is crucial that the exports are maintained, that our sales are maintained. It is very important to farmers that when they make a commitment to a nation, a commitment of sales, that that commitment is kept. If you do not live up to contractual commitments, as my friend from London West has just said, the competitors will step in and they will keep the commitment that you made in the first place. The farmers understand that and I think we all understand that. This is why the strike has to be ended. The work has to be resumed.

• (1220)

I checked the figures just this morning, Madam Speaker, and there is something like 3,700 boxcars waiting to be unloaded. That is a lot of wheat. That is a lot of boxcars. That is a lot of work and it has to be done right away.

In conclusion, I want to say it is of paramount importance to farmers, particularly on the prairies and in western Canada, that work resume at Thunder Bay. The grain must move.

It is unfortunate again that we find ourselves in a situation where farmers are pitted against organized labour but in this case economic factors are at the fore and they must be dealt with. The only way we can deal with it right now is to get this legislation passed as quickly as possible so that the grain handlers can get back to work.