

The questions before us now are questions of national interest. What is happening to Canada? As I said a few moments ago, the ports have been closed for 90 days during this crop year. The government told us it wanted to wait a little longer before acting; it seems to us that until the pinch is felt down east there is no real pressure. It is interesting to note that grain from Western Canada is still flowing normally to eastern Canada.

The NDP did not want this debate.

Mr. Benjamin: Who said that? Where did you get that from?

An hon. Member: Frank Hamilton said it.

Mr. Benjamin: That was a mean thing to say, Frank. It is not even true.

● (0220)

Mr. Hamilton (Swift Current-Maple Creek): Hon. members opposite have said that this is a motion of desperation. I agree that it is a motion of desperation on behalf of a great number of Canadians. Grain is not moving from the Pacific seaboard, and it will not do so. The problem is far from over.

Not one speaker on the government side has mentioned inflation, which surely is the root cause of all our problems. If the longshoremen settle, we still have to deal with the foremen of the longshoremen, who are a unionized group and who told me on the telephone today that as soon as the longshoremen settle they will come out and tie up 90 per cent of the Pacific seaboard.

The hon. member for Grenville-Carleton (Mr. Baker) mentioned that the government had chided us for having sad faces. I think we have good reason to have sad faces when we receive letters, telegrams and telephone calls from the grain producers of western Canada and from our overseas customers. The minister in charge of the Wheat Board has no real appreciation of the situation in human terms. The message that I receive in letters and from telephone calls is that the first step in solving this problem is to get rid of Otto Lang.

We can well ask, where is the Minister of Labour (Mr. Munro) tonight? I should like to go back to some of the statements he made on October 7, 1974, in the grain debate. The Minister of Labour, as reported at page 165 of *Hansard*, had this to say:

—the governor in council, having decided that any work stoppage would adversely affect the national interest, made an order pursuant to section 181 of the Canada Labour Code, Part V, Industrial Relations, to suspend any work stoppage until the election was over.

A little further on he said:

First, I take issue with those parties who consider that, by endorsing the commissioner's recommendations, the government has not acted impartially and is, in effect, encouraging so-called "inflationary" settlements.

We all know now that they sought the wind and are reaping the whirlwind. The settlement made last fall was an effective rate of 54.2 per cent. Further on in his speech on October 7, 1974, the Minister of Labour said:

To say this dispute is disturbing would be to understate the case. It marks yet another labour relations fiasco in an industry which for years has been characterized by confrontation and even hostility.

Grain Shipments

Surely that is an indication of the kind of problem the government is facing on the Pacific seaboard. It is obvious that the government does not hesitate to withdraw the right to strike when an election is in the offing. After the election it wants to govern, but it does not seem very interested in accepting the responsibility. As I have said, not one member opposite has mentioned inflation tonight, the root cause of labour unrest in Canada.

Hon. members opposite have claimed that the people of Canada spoke on July 8. If the people of Canada had known on July 8 what they know now, we would have a different government in this country. My colleague from Moose Jaw (Mr. Neil) mentioned the government has absolute control over the grain industry. About the only freedom that the western farmers have left is how much to plant. Surely the government must accept some responsibility for the tremendous bills, demurrage and broken contracts that will ensue from the stoppage on the Pacific seaboard. Mention was made of \$30 million; my guess is that it will be closer to \$50 million in this crop year.

In the part of the country I am from, western Saskatchewan, we move all our grain to the Pacific seaboard. I should like to go back about nine months and tell the House what these producers have been up against. On May 1, 1974, the Vancouver grain handlers threatened to go out on strike. On May 27, 1974, the Minister of Labour evoked a section of the labour act to prevent lock-out or strike action at Vancouver until after the July 8 federal election. On July 12, 1974, 2,500 Alberta meat packing company employees, locked out since June 5, may return to work by July 17, it was reported.

In August, 1974, Canada's west coast labour dispute remained unsolved. On August 31, grain movements continued to be snarled by labour interruptions. Striking Canadian marine officers paralysed shipping on the Great Lakes. On September 25 the Minister of Labour closed the door to further negotiations between Vancouver grain handlers and terminal operators by announcing government approval of the Perry report. On September 26 the lock-out and strike of Vancouver grain handlers entered its second month. This dispute and the strike at Thunder Bay brought exports of grain to a virtual standstill.

Legislation to end the Vancouver dispute was introduced in the House of Commons on October 7 and received royal assent on October 10. On October 12 grain handlers reported to work at Vancouver for the first time since August 23. On October 15, Mr. Justice Bayda was appointed to investigate the complex issue on the west coast. On October 30 grain started to move again on the St. Lawrence, the first to be moved since August 7. On November 21 the entire system of the B.C. railway was shut down by striking shopcraft workers. On November 23 the grain inspectors went out on strike. On November 27 meat graders across Canada joined the grain inspectors in strike action. On December 5 the federal government and the grain inspectors ratified a new 15-month agreement. On January 6 of 1975 the B.C. railway and shopcraft unions ratified a new nine-month agreement. On January 23 wild-cat strikes occurred on the CNR. On February 18 weighmen at Canada's terminals went out on strike. On February 20 contract negotiations between the B.C. longshoremen and the B.C. Maritime Employers Associa-