

Supply—Transport

submit that the minister should consider this problem a very urgent one.

In the last five years our own elevators have greeted 420 Great Lakes ships and 1,500 carloads of grain. Some 178 million bushels of grain have been shipped on 440 ocean liners.

Three Rivers Grain Elevators Company has spent in the last five years \$7,310,000 in salaries and sundry expenditures in my home town. More than 7,161,180 tons of merchandise of all kinds have been handled by our elevators during those last years. Again I point out that due to the impact of such an industry on our national and on our local economy, this matter should be granted top priority by the minister in order to find a solution.

[Translation]

Here is, in my opinion, the remedial action that should be proposed:

1. I believe a meeting should be held between the authorized representatives of the National Harbours Board, the Quebec Minister of Municipal Affairs or his representatives, the municipal authorities of Trois-Rivières and those of the Three Rivers Grain Elevators Company.

2. I have the impression that the Trois-Rivières municipal council, with the consent of the Quebec Department of Municipal Affairs, following such a meeting, would be willing to make certain arrangements, possibly according to a progressive formula.

3. Nevertheless, this will not be enough. The Canadian Wheat Board will probably have to agree to some increases in handling rates, while keeping them competitive with those of other countries.

• (8:10 p.m.)

4. The National Harbours Board should, in addition, grant some rent reductions and even go as far as to grant subsidies to counteract this unfortunate tax increase through which our grain elevators are in danger of disappearing.

Mr. Chairman, if the fact that the Trois-Rivières harbour is one of the most profitable in Canada is taken into account, I shall be deemed justified in making such proposals. I repeat that a solution must urgently be found to this problem to benefit all interested parties.

I shall digress to emphasize another situation I find difficulty to understand.

These last few weeks a new manager from God knows where has been named to the port

[Mr. Mongrain.]

of Trois-Rivières. I am told that he has only served five years with the National Harbours Board, that he has passed no civil service examination, that there has been no call for applications for this position, and that although his name is Lauzon he is, practically speaking, painfully bilingual. Far be it from me to blame him for this deficiency and if his name were Webster or Pickersgill, I would, on the contrary, congratulate him for the little bit of French which he knows.

But I know that we already had, among the personnel of the Trois-Rivières office, competent employees with 10, 15, 20 and 25 years of service. There was even one who had given up his turn for the position of manager and who had then been promised this promotion.

I fail to see why a person with only five years' experience was appointed, unless it is shown that he is extremely competent.

I intend, Mr. Chairman, to make a full inquiry into the standards set for promotions within the National Harbours Board.

As I was saying, in view of the tremendous industrial and business development which can be expected in my region, it is absolutely necessary to plan development of port facilities in Trois-Rivières and Cap de la Madeleine.

I apologize if I am trespassing on the grounds of my colleague, the hon. member for Champlain (Mr. Matte), but in a few months it will all be part of my constituency, and I am making a head start.

Planning should then be considered in terms of the next ten years, for what we now have is becoming inadequate in view of what is expected in our area. I submit that it would be wise to extend port facilities towards Cap de la Madeleine in order to better serve the industries in the Trois-Rivières area, west of St. Maurice, north of the St. Lawrence.

At one time, during the first world war, Trois-Rivières had its own dry dock. We feel, back home, that arrangements should be made to refit this dry dock, at least for ships of low tonnage, always keeping in mind what is expected to come into the area. And we would be killing two birds with one stone, because the Trois-Rivières municipality, with the co-operation of generous citizens, has invested several thousand of dollars to build a marina which is certainly one of the most modern and best located in Canada.

It already accommodates a great number of American crafts and an overload is expected for 1967. All that is needed is a little dredging and some secondary facilities.