

Private Members' Business

ment, know that the movement of grain is an essential service. They know that if they fail in their collective bargaining process that the government has to come to the rescue. We go through this ritual dance virtually on an annual basis and the unions and the employers are content perpetuate this situation.

One then asks: How many days have to be lost? How many millions of dollars of sales are lost? How much misery is inflicted on third parties, such as the Canadian agricultural producer, before a settlement is finally imposed?

The companies know that they will get the business in the end. Whether it is the grain companies, railroad, shippers or whoever, they know that the grain has to come through their system. The unions as well know that they will get it in the end because sooner or later the grain has to go through the funnel, into the system, and down the chute.

The prairie farmer also knows that he will get it in the end. The problem of the prairie farmer is that it is more of an anatomical question at that point. The producer gets it in the end. It is the producer that has to bear the cost of the failure of labour and management to conclude their agreements. The prairie farmer loses in terms of lost sales, untimely delays, and having to pay demurrage while ships languish in port waiting for the opportunity to load.

The producers have a very difficult situation because, at the same time as they are beset by low world prices and ever-increasing input costs, they face this added possibility of further shut-downs in the grain handling and transportation system. Of course, the Canadian public does as well. When the farmer cannot get what he deserves from a market-place that does not work, whether it is because of destructive and unfair foreign competition, or whether it is because of destructive and unfair problems in terms of domestic labour-management strife, it is the farmer then who has to get it from the government. Canadian taxpayers have to contribute more through the tax system to find the money to help fund the programs that Canadian farmers need in order to survive.

It seems to me that we need to find a better way. Strikes and lock-outs are rather blunt, crude, and

archaic instruments. Surely we can make the effort to seek more workable and more suitable alternatives.

This bill, Bill C-250, as worded, would curtail work stoppages by grain handlers, railway workers, and all those involved in the movement of grain from the farm-gate to export. A mechanism of binding conciliation would be implemented and so on. I gloss over it because it is not very important. In fact, I would urge that members in the House not waste particular time in looking at the wording of this bill, Bill C-250. The proposal in it is only one of many possibilities.

What I wish to do is to focus the intention of the House on the problem to try to secure some relief for the people who suffer when labour and management fail to resolve these problems. The bill is simply an attempt, once again, to get the House to pay some attention to a serious problem.

We are not here right now to union bash or to unduly criticize labour or management. What we would like to do is to try to find a better way. Surely, in our modern society, there is a better way than this sort of blunt instrument.

The subject matter of this bill cannot be dealt with in one hour of Private Members' Business or in five hours. I believe that it requires some study by a parliamentary committee where there is some research and members could seriously consider alternatives and examine them without prejudice and without any preconceived notions. Indeed, I would very much appreciate the consent of the House to a motion which would withdraw the bill and would in fact refer the subject matter to the appropriate committee and I will come to that in a few minutes.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Order, please. Before the hon. member comes to that, I must advise him that he alone cannot put the motion. He will not be able to put that motion on his own bill.

Mr. Wilson (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia): I appreciate your advice, Mr. Speaker—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The hon. member did not let me finish. If he gets unanimous consent, yes; if he does not, he will have to get somebody else to put the motion.

Mr. Wilson (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That is the understanding that I have and I appreciate your confirmation.