

Proceedings on Adjournment Motion

questions that have been asked in this House in order that there may be that degree of co-operation which I am sure the minister wishes to receive.

Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Manpower and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, may I point out that there was no chance to have the question repeated on the earlier occasion when it was asked, and I therefore could not discover what the hon. member had been talking about at that time. My problem at that time was that he had referred to a couple of days of delays. It turns out that he was referring to problems caused by landslides, and so on, which resulted in temporary difficulties.

That fact is that over the whole of the winter, from the fall onward, there were with respect to the CNR some sporadic slowdowns and labour problems which, as the Wheat Board reported to me, amounted in total to approximately one week's loss in cars arriving in Vancouver. We did not at that time make a great deal of this and I do not make much of it now, because that would involve our getting into the labour problem. That is why I talked quietly to my colleague the Minister of Labour (Mr. Mackasey). We do not, unless we feel that the crisis requires special intervention, involve my colleague the Minister of Transport (Mr. Jamieson).

These slowdowns occurred. The hon. member asks how long it takes for grain to be brought to Vancouver when the Wheat Board knows about a ship. The Wheat Board tells me that it takes about three weeks to undertake a program of grain movement from the country to Vancouver. Of course, this is normally done well in advance of the shipping arriving, as the hon. member suggests. When ships arrive in bunches, that is a sign of peak deliveries being made. There are delays in shipping, partly because of delays in ports abroad, and this leads to congestion from time to time.

● (10:10 a.m.)

The important thing is that the February loadings out of Vancouver were at approximately record levels. It looks as though in March we will again have approximately record levels of loadings of ships. The number of ships waiting at this moment is six, with eight vessels loading. The amount of grain in store in Vancouver has again been built up. There are again signs of labour problems which give me great concern. This time the CPR is showing some signs of difficulties. I am concerned about them. This could cause a slowdown at any time.

Mr. Skoberg: Where?

Mr. Lang: This is at the yards in Vancouver. It has not yet impeded us but we are disturbed a great deal. So far it is working very well. The block system is working very well. The co-ordinators at Vancouver and Thunder Bay are also working very well. We are arriving at record levels. The ships are there in decreasing numbers every day. I should draw to the hon. member's attention the fact that our exports of grain are at levels which mean an increased flow of cash to the Prairie farmers.

[Mr. Skoberg.]

HEALTH—CYCLAMATES—COMPENSATION TO FOOD PROCESSORS FOR LOSSES CAUSED BY BAN

Mr. Mark Rose (Fraser Valley West): Mr. Speaker, my interest in this matter was initially motivated by the effect of the cyclamates ban in October, 1969, on a relatively small Canadian food packer in my constituency. This was my initial concern. I will return to this point later.

It seems that the cyclamates question and their precipitous banning brings into focus the whole question of food additives. It is not simply a question of dietary foods and the use of artificial sweeteners for diabetics and weight-watchers; it includes the use of food additives in general in our highly technological and contemporary food industry. Additives of various chemicals are being used with increasing intensity for a variety of reasons. They are used to maintain colour in meats, add flavour, preserve a fresh appearance, bleach, and a host of other reasons. All these reasons have encouraged competitive manufacturers. They have been given the green light for these additives by the Food and Drug Directorate to intensify the inclusion of additives because of the interest of the consumers for convenience foods and other kinds of foods.

The cyclamates case is typical and symbolic because in order to meet import competition from the United States processors began to employ cyclohexylsulphamic salts in diet foods, canned goods, cookies, jams, jellies, etc. They have been doing this for the past 20 years. It should be pointed out that processors who used cyclamates until the announced ban in October, 1969, had fully and completely followed the government's regulations in the use of these additives. For one small industry in my constituency, the loss was in excess of \$50,000 because of the ban by the minister. Multiply the cost to processors across Canada and we get an idea of the intensity of the problem, especially when the axe falls, as it did, without warning.

I wish to emphatically point out that I hold no brief for any compromise with public safety. However, the ban came about after these processors, operating under the food and drug regulations, had already completed their pack for the year. What happened to cyclamates can happen in the case of other additives. It is only a question of time as to when and where the ban will strike next.

The government was, and is, prepared to compensate swordfishermen if it is found that their catches contain dangerous amounts of mercury. What is it prepared to do for the law-abiding processors? From the indications of the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Munro), they are prepared to absolutely nothing; the processors must take the loss. We should be looking toward the day when there will be some form of compensation to soften such blows in the future. We have had cyclamates and other things banned, and undoubtedly there will be more additives condemned in the future. Hon. members may know that the United States, which started all this controversy, has now reversed its decision on the cyclamates ban. It is interesting to compare what