

Supply—Agriculture

China. On October 23, the vessel *Amstelstad* was loading over half a million bushels of No. 5 wheat at Prince Rupert, also destined for China.

We have an elevator here with a working capacity of 800,000 to 900,000 bushels and if one ship comes along, as happened, and takes 786,000 bushels of grain there is not very much left for another ship that might be in port or might be coming into the port. The result is that this second ship has to wait until sufficient grain has been moved into the port by the C.N.R., and the grain has been cleaned and so on. I merely point this out for the benefit of those who may not be familiar with the situation. While the rated capacity of the elevator is a million and a quarter bushels, as the minister says, that is not the figure we should concern ourselves with but rather the operating capacity which is such that one ship can take a sufficient amount out of the elevator to leave the elevator in the position of not being able to be used to load grain after the ship has left.

As I say, we appreciate the statement of the minister and I intend to communicate immediately with the people in Prince Rupert. Every day that I and the minister are here on orders of the day I intend to ask him further questions with respect to whether he has finished his consideration of this matter.

The Chairman: Shall the vote carry?

Mr. Martin (Timmins): Mr. Chairman, while the minister is in such a genial mood and before we leave this item perhaps he could answer the questions I raised about the farmers of the Timmins area, the problem they are faced with and whether the government is better prepared to meet the situation than was the case four years ago.

Mr. Hays: I think the hon. member asked two questions. One had to do with the climatic conditions existing this year with 12-foot snow drifts. The government co-operates of course with the governments of the provinces if help is needed in such areas. If flood conditions arise or other disasters take place and the province declares that they cannot cope with the problem then the federal government comes into the picture and helps. This has been done in Nova Scotia and Alberta I think we also helped the government of British Columbia this year in moving feed into such areas.

In connection with the vegetables that the hon. member mentioned, may I say that we do have a seasonal duty. I do not recall just how much it is. Sometimes it is in effect for seven or eight weeks and applies to peaches, for instance, or any of these seasonal crops. I would be glad to get this information for the hon. member so he will be familiar with the situation and I would be interested in

knowing what crops are involved in the problem. Certainly we would be glad to take a look at the matter.

Mr. Peters: Mr. Chairman, with relation to the crop problem I wonder whether it has come to the minister's attention that in Ontario difficulty has developed in small areas and the problem has been solved in many ways over a period of time. I should like to draw on only one example. The hon. member for Timmins has the same problem but it is fairly specific. In my constituency we had limited area damage by hail last fall, but the damage in that limited area involving about two townships was almost complete, so far as feed grain is concerned to meet the farmers' requirements for the year.

The situation is such that crop insurance as we know it federally, or as it has been developed provincially and municipally, is of no value to the farmers in my area because of the fact that they are engaged in mixed farming. If they had a guaranteed revenue from their feed grain this would only represent one tenth of their cash crop and, in fact, the feed grain is used in the production of their cash crop generally. However, the damage was sufficient to eliminate all their income because they had to go out and purchase feed grain. The result is that they are now in the position where it will be almost impossible for them to get seed grain this spring. They feel, and I think justifiably so, that they should be able to look to the provincial or federal governments for assistance in the purchase of certified seed grain to meet their requirements and that this should not be done as it has been in many years with relation to other seed grain programs of an emergency nature, whereby repayment was taken care of by making it a charge on the land itself.

A petition has been forwarded to the provincial department of agriculture from my area in this regard and I am sure that the minister will be asked for some assistance. It should be borne in mind that this only highlights the problem that we have had with crop insurance and the ability of the farmers in many areas of Canada to take advantage of crop insurance. In this particular case the major part of the income of the farmers is derived either from beef or dairy products, and crop insurance would have very little effect because the farmer would have to insure grass, hay and feed grains.

The possibilities of insurance against hail damage were very small. The fact that such damage does not occur too often in some localities has meant that it has been a very expensive proposition for the farmer to carry hail insurance.