

Feed Grain

the UPA see the members of Parliament, irrespectively of their party membership, mainly those of the government, they come to us, they go to the neo-democrats, to the progressive conservatives, they often meet members of the cabinet, but they say: It will settle by itself. Mr. Speaker, who meets the greatest difficulties, but the producers? Therefore the producers, through their association, should take advantage of the law, ask for an injunction against the longshoremen association, ordering them to let the millers get feeds to distribute to their customers. It is once again the same old story of Pontius Pilate washing his hands. We know that. One has to have guts enough to state that in the face of the whole population, particularly that of Eastern Canada and of the province of Quebec.

I sincerely wish that the present situation, added to all the ones we have been experiencing for some months and some years, will be a lesson and that the government will come to grips with the labour matters.

If we have to pass emergency legislation once again to get those people back to work, let us do it. However, that should be the last time. I notice by the gestures of the hon. member for Trois-Rivières (Mr. Lajoie), that he seems to be aware of the matter. Since I arrived to Parliament, this is the fifth or sixth time we came back, we even had to come back in summer time, in July, to pass emergency legislation, because no understanding was possible between employers and employees. I understand that it is due to the spiralling increase of the cost of living, and that is inflation. I believe that the federal minister of Labour, together with his provincial counterparts should agree once for all to pass comprehensive legislation in order to put an end to that kind of strike.

The government must find once for all a permanent solution to all those conflicts which are growing in number and increasingly undermining our economy. Besides, that does not solve anything since there is no end to it! We are going through increasingly difficult years and, in my opinion, it is our duty to focus our efforts on the search for new mechanisms especially adjusted to our times of constant economic disruption. I would even say that the right to strike should in fact be now considered as outmoded since it no longer produces expected results.

● (2230)

Those are the points which I consider to be of the utmost importance in the present debate, Mr. Speaker. Indeed, I feel that we must at any rate give farmers the immediate guarantee they will be able to get necessary supplies for their cattle. On the other hand, I ask the House to consider as well to set up new playing rules in the labour field, so as to avoid once and for all to have to intervene by passing more and more emergency legislation.

Mr. Léopold Corriveau (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, let me first say that I am glad to have the opportunity to address the House on this matter.

May I point out to some opposition members who mentioned that the Minister of Agriculture was not here tonight that we have a very active Minister of Agriculture who wants to protect the interests of farmers. For those

[Mr. Beaudoin.]

reasons, the Minister of Agriculture is not here tonight to take part in this emergency debate.

As some of you know, the Minister already had an engagement to meet a group of producers in eastern Ontario and at the same time attend a consumers' symposium. When you deal with agriculture, you necessarily have to deal with consumption, and I think the Minister of Agriculture is quite aware of it.

Mr. Speaker, since the beginning of the longshoremen's strike in Quebec, several statements have been made which were either exaggerations or half-truths. As Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture, I would like to address myself to those remarks, thereby putting the situation in its true light.

When it became apparent that a strike was imminent, the minister immediately contacted his officials and assistants and asked them to keep him informed of every development taking place in eastern ports, particularly in Quebec.

Most members know that the Canadian Livestock Feed Board is responsible for ensuring adequate supplies of feed grains in eastern Canada and British Columbia. Unfortunately, we have had five strikes within one year. Some members, like the hon. member for Joliette (Mr. La Salle) and especially the hon. member for Richmond (Mr. Beaudoin), have been telling us tonight that an emergency legislation should be passed to force the longshoremen back to work, when last Sunday at a convention which seemed to be a national mini-convention in my area and in my town, asbestos strikers were called upon on the radio to continue their strike in order to press their demands and earn better wages.

I think the hon. member for Richmond should expect asbestos miners not to be all "dummies". You cannot have it both ways, that is three days earlier, he said to the strikers: Continue your strike, apply all necessary pressures on mining companies to claim your rights; and tonight, he asks the government to present an emergency legislation to force longshoremen back to work.

I believe this is playing with people's feelings. I hope the same member will be forced to retract his statements over the radio stations in my area and tell asbestos workers now on strike: "I lied when I told you I supported the strike, because three days later I stated in the House of Commons that a back-to-work legislation should be voted concerning the longshoremen strike.

If in each of the five strikes we have had in one year's time the government had brought down back-to-work legislation, we should seriously consider with drawing workers the right to strike. But this government in not anti-labour. We trust the unions and the people now negotiating to bring about a settlement that is fair to every Canadian.

As I said, live cattle deliveries to Quebec slaughterhouses are being monitored—and I stress this because it has been submitted a while ago by some members that Eastern Canada slaughterhouses are congested because producers were unable to get feed grain and apparently a majority of them were sending their cattle in.

I must emphasize again that the minister of Agriculture (Mr. Whelan) has been monitoring the number of heads of