

Grain Shipments

Conservative party speak with forked tongues and hot mouths. I assure him that we do not speak with forked tongues and hot mouths. The Conservative party is made up of farmers, small businessmen, railroad workers and people from all walks of life. I am a telephone man who belonged to unions.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McKenzie: My roommate was a railway worker who is concerned about unions. As I said, the Conservative party is concerned about people in all walks of life; it is not concerned about one special group only.

The record of the government following the July 8 election has been dismal. Clearly it has created a serious mess in west coast grain handling and there is every indication that the mess will remain, even though one strike was settled today. In 1973, when parliament was recalled to deal with the rail strike, I said that that dispute represented only the tip of the iceberg. The Perry report again confirmed that both present inflation and uncertainty about future inflation contributed to the breakdown in contract negotiations. The Trudeau government, which still lacks an effective policy to deal with inflation, has now fouled up prospects of a negotiated settlement on the west coast. Canadians who placed their trust in a majority Trudeau government are finding that trust betrayed in short order.

Strangely, neither the President of the Treasury Board nor the minister responsible for the Wheat Board talked about the reason for labour unrest in this country. The reason is double-digit inflation. They made it abundantly clear that they intend to do nothing to tackle the problem. So far they have done nothing. I ought to correct that; they have done a couple of things, one of them being the appointment of Beryl Plumptre to head a board which duplicates the work of the Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. That department, with a budget of \$48 million and staff of 2,400 people, should be doing her job. A couple of weeks ago the board looked at inflation, but it did it by staying in \$300-a-day hotel rooms, eating lobster and steak, and talking with businessmen. If that is how it is delving into inflation, it will not wash. The Canadian people will not accept it.

According to a recent Gallup poll, almost three times as many people say their opinion of the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) has gone down as say it has gone up in the past three months. Thirty-six per cent say their opinion has gone down, but only 13 per cent say it has gone up. That shows why we were right in demanding this debate. If any Liberals doubt my word, let them come to my office and I will show them the kind of mail we are bombarded with from members of the public who are fed up with this government.

Mr. Carl Beigie, executive director of the C.D. Howe Research Institute in Montreal, says the federal government has been too concerned with short-term stop-gap policies and has placed too much emphasis on convincing the public that Canada is uniquely placed to survive the current economic crisis with relatively little pain. This government reminds me of Johnston and Johnston, and we all know who they were—

[Mr. McKenzie.]

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Morin): Order, please. I remind the hon. member that the purpose of this debate is the discussion of a specific and important matter requiring urgent consideration, namely, the present work stoppages which have ended all grain shipments from Canada affecting grain deliveries to all foreign countries.

Mr. McKenzie: Madam Speaker, as I was saying, the source of our troubles is double-digit inflation. Until we solve that problem, strikes will continue. Mr. William A. Dimma, Dean of York University's Faculty of Administrative Studies, said, as reported in the *Montreal Gazette* of February 17, 1975:

The damage done by severe inflation and the expectation that it will continue is evident.

If it is prolonged, and especially if the wrong or no prescriptions are applied, it harms almost everyone.

The sort of labour unrest evident since September 30, when parliament convened, will continue until the government resolves the problem of double-digit inflation. We are not interested in the government's excuses. It always blames somebody else. As Mr. Dimma says, we shall see an increased frequency and severity of strikes and lock-outs. There will be an enormous weakening of capital markets. He explained the reasons for Canada's problems. Canada, in the eyes of the world, is like the horse's end—I will not use the appropriate word, but hon. members know what I mean.

Over a quarter of our exports move through the port of Vancouver, yet exports are curtailed because of strikes. In the first 33 weeks of the current crop year, grain shipping was shut down for 11 weeks. There have been only two occasions since August, 1973, when vessels have not been waiting to load at Vancouver. Those two occasions amounted to only 18 working days. As of March 10, 30 vessels had been waiting and 15,000 boxcars have been bunched up in the west, trying to get into the port. As of March 18, 33 vessels were waiting.

Even though a strike has been settled today, it will take weeks to clear the pile-up of boxcars on the prairies. Bangladesh has suffered and Japan cancelled an order. Buyers will not look to this country for more orders, because we are always on strike. Strikes affect every farmer in the west, and cost us millions of dollars.

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Mr. G. L. Harrold, Chairman of the Wheat Board Advisory Committee and President of the Alberta Wheat Pool, says the Board may be forced to limit future sales through West Coast ports to 20 million bushels a month or less. The average movement in the past three years has been 30 million bushels a month. We have given a lot of business to Seattle since these strikes began. We have revitalized United States ports which have been dead for years. San Francisco is now very active in handling grain because we are always on strike. Although the western farmer is suffering, and although the Canadian economy is suffering because of the strikes, the Prime Minister on March 18 said he did not see the possibility of parliament being called upon to end the strikes as there was no urgency involved.

Mr. Goodale: That is not true. That is not what he said.