

*Fruit Wastage—Containers*

fish is shipped in boxes in a frozen state. The situation is, therefore, serious not only for the man who ships fruit, but also for the poultryman, the fisherman and the fish packers.

I am not going to discuss the merits or demerits of the strike—although this can be safely said, that it is high time the labour laws in this country were clarified as to the respective jurisdictions of provincial and dominion governments. If there is anything that has beclouded the issue and befuddled the public, surely it has been the process of passing the buck from the provincial government to the dominion government, and the dominion taking the stand at times that it is up to the provincial governments to come in and do something. I suggest to the Minister of Labour that more consultation be had with the provinces with a view to clarifying the matter and coming to some definite agreement or policy with respect to the labour laws of this country. They cannot be brushed aside. Perhaps this is not the time to settle this question, when we are in the midst of heated strikes, but measures will have to be taken to prevent similar situations from arising in other parts of the dominion.

I rose particularly to support the hon. member for Fraser Valley and also to speak on behalf of those farmers in my district who are wondering what the outcome will be. I plead with the government not to stand idly by and see this waste of good food and the loss of savings and capital of men who have invested their all in this business.

Mr. ANGUS MacINNIS (Vancouver East): Mr. Speaker, as a British Columbia member who is deeply interested in this question I wish to say a few words on the matter brought up by the hon. member for Fraser Valley (Mr. Cruickshank). May I say to the hon. member that he need not apologize for raising this very important question, and he certainly need not apologize for the way he has stated his case to the house. Perhaps it is not his case, but the case of the fruit growers of British Columbia.

The situation is so serious that I am sure everyone who speaks will be careful not to say anything that will help to make it worse than it is. The hon. member for Fraser Valley mentioned that there was a lumber shortage before the strike began, but I think it must be admitted that the strike has intensified the difficulty and perhaps precipitated the present crisis. If there had been no strike, while here and there, there might have been shortages of lumber for crates, it would not

[Mr. Fulton.]

have been a very serious matter. The ultimate solution of course is a quick ending to the strike and it seems to me that only the governments—the government here and the government in British Columbia—can bring that about. I am frank in saying that I have no solution to offer, but I do submit that one of the ways in which an end of the strike can be brought about is first to ascertain the facts or the questions at issue and then give publicity to any offers of settlement made by the parties concerned. In this way public opinion may be brought to bear against those who will not acquiesce when a reasonable offer is made.

The hon. member for New Westminster (Mr. Reid) has pointed out, I think fairly, the difficulty of the position of the fruit growers in British Columbia. This crop must be harvested and shipped in a matter of days. There can be no delays. I should like to point out the social nature of our production in this day and age. It is quite clear that the British Columbia fruit grower does not grow the fruit alone. He takes part in the growing of fruit, but he cannot complete the operation until the fruit has reached the ultimate consumer. It is quite clear that before it reaches the ultimate consumer the lumber worker must take part in the fruit growing, as well as the box manufacturer and a host of other people. We can no longer leave our economic life to the chances of a struggle between the various groups engaged in production, each working for its own end.

Two or three important considerations must be kept in mind. The first is that quick action must be taken. We cannot wait even for a few days. Action must be taken immediately if the strawberry crop is to be saved. I followed carefully what the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Gardiner) said, and I thought he indicated that he was going to give direct reply to the questions asked yesterday by the hon. member for Fraser Valley. But I could not discover any direct reply to the hon. member's last question.

Mr. GARDINER: We are prepared to give permits to export five hundred tons. That ought to be a sufficiently direct reply to the question.

Mr. MacINNIS: The permits should be issued immediately if they are required immediately.

Mr. GARDINER: The question asked was: Are you prepared to give permits for five hundred tons of raspberries which are not