

it can take effect as early as Friday. Millers and farm producers in the area of Montreal and Trois-Rivières must haul grain from Prescott by truck. That is no doubt quite detrimental to the economic well-being of Quebec producers because they then have to pay \$7 a ton more for grain. Producers on the Northern shore which includes Charlevoix and lower St. Lawrence producers must pay between \$10 and \$12 more than the normal price for grain coming from Prescott.

But there is another problem. Some dealers now take advantage of the situation and sometimes ask between 5 cents and 10 cents more per cwt. Thus, in a conflict—and it is not a matter of judging whether it is justified or not—in a conflict, as the Postmaster General (Mr. Mackasey) explained, opposing longshoremen to their employers, it is farmers and, ultimately consumers who will have to foot the bill, and that is the reason why I am glad to support the request submitted by the hon. member for Saint-Hyacinthe (Mr. Wagner), that is to ask longshoremen to act as good citizens by allowing farmers access to grain elevators now.

In an emergency situation like the one we are now facing, Mr. Speaker, we hear many different things. One speaker tonight said that pigs were eating each other; they must be cannibal pigs, certainly not pigs from Charlevoix.

I am happy to welcome the Minister of Agriculture, Mr. Speaker. In spite of his absence from Ottawa, explained several times tonight in the House, the members of the Opposition have continued to criticize him in an attempt to prove that he is not interested in the problems of Quebec farmers. That is completely false, and the Minister's presence in the House at 1:45 is a proof of his interest in the problems we are now facing.

● (0040)

[English]

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

An hon. Member: Now the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Whelan) is back. He must have thought it was over.

An hon. Member: Who said he wasn't here?

Mr. Clark (Rocky Mountain): Five hours late.

An hon. Member: He didn't miss anything when you spoke.

Mr. Paproski: Who woke him up? Where are the other ministers? Where is your lieutenant from Quebec, Lalonde?

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Boulanger): Order, please. I think hon. members should listen to the hon. member who has the floor.

[Translation]

Mr. Lapointe: Mr. Speaker, if Charlevoix has no carnivorous pigs and no chickens fluttering because they are not fed enough grain, the producers of the area as all those in Quebec are experiencing very urgent problems and, as all other members on this side of the House who represent

### Feed Grain

Quebec ridings, we have a heart to find a solution as quickly as possible to a situation that is getting more and more difficult.

The problem we now have is not so much with supply in Quebec ports, because, as the parliamentary secretary to the Minister of Agriculture has indicated, measures have been taken. For instance, two ships are now on their way to ports on the St. Lawrence, another has been rerouted towards Prescott, thus making stocking possible, etc. We are experiencing a labour dispute, and in a country with a democratic tradition as Canada, we must let negotiations proceed freely and avoid bringing all problems before Parliament to settle labour relations. The longshoremen are availing themselves of a legitimate right which this Parliament has granted to them as well as to all other Canadians; moreover, theirs is a legal strike. However, as the Prime Minister indicated in the House yesterday in reply to a question from the hon. member for Bonaventure-Îles-de-la-Madeleine (Mr. Béchard), the common interest must be taken into account. And like all other hon. members on this side, I feel that the government is acting wisely, before introducing any special legislation in the House, letting the bargaining process take its course, before considering legislative action. If we were to act too quickly, as it is always the case when we introduce a special legislation to force strikers back to work, NDP members would accuse us of facism, while Progressive Conservative members would join our Social Credit friends in branding us as socialists.

If we favour bargaining and make use of every possible means of reaching a harmonious settlement to a dispute, some hon. members, as the hon. member for Joliette (Mr. La Salle) did so inconsequently tonight, would accuse us of carelessness and weakness, while others would say that hon. members from the Province of Quebec are nothing but pawns in the House for respecting the rights we have granted to these people as to any other group of Canadians. The hon. members from this side are aware of the serious situation which prevails in Quebec. We know that it is extremely serious. And when the time comes, if it does come, the government will certainly not hesitate introducing a special legislation. That is what I call leadership.

[English]

Mr. Arnold Malone (Battle River): Mr. Speaker, I think we are privileged in this House that the hon. member for Bellechasse (Mr. Lambert) and the hon. member for Joliette (Mr. La Salle) have brought this important matter to our attention. I feel a certain sense of privilege in having the opportunity to speak on it, not only because I come from the rural riding of Battle River, in the province of Alberta, and not only because this is a matter that affects all Canadians but, more importantly, because it is an international problem that faces the whole agricultural industry. The fact is that every nation in the world which depends on an agricultural economy is among the world's poorest countries, and every industrialized nation of the world can look to its economic sectors and note that the agricultural regions are among the poorest of the country.

In this debate tonight, when talking about the agricultural industry we can show by facts and statistics, it has taken a back seat and, more importantly, that this govern-