

recognize a member. In due course I will have to recognize the hon. member for Kamloops again, but I now call it five o'clock.

It being five o'clock, the House will now proceed to the consideration of Private Members' Business as listed on today's Order paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[English]

CANADA LABOUR CODE

MEASURE TO AMEND

Mr. Geoff Wilson (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Asiniboia) moved that Bill C-250, an act to amend the Canada Labour Code (grain handling), be read the second time and referred to a legislation committee.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to speak to this private member's initiative, which was brought forward on behalf of prairie grain producers who depend, in such large measure, on the export market to move their product.

Hon. members, I am sure, will know that domestic consumption of wheat in Canada amounts to, perhaps, 7 per cent of the crop insofar as human consumption is concerned and perhaps another 10 per cent is consumed by animals. In excess of 80 per cent of the wheat crop has to go to export.

Hon. members will also know that prairie farmers have been beset, over the past number of years, by serious drought and today they face a very debilitating export subsidy trade war between the European Economic Community and the United States. The history of this goes back some years. Back in the 1960s, the common agricultural policy of the European Economic Community brought forward massive subsidies which led to over-production of a number of agricultural commodities, including wheat. Thus, those countries moved from a position of being net importers to the point where they had surplus and, when they had surplus, they began to dump it on the world market.

For a time, the United States suffered the consequences and saw its share of the wheat market decline. But, in the early 1980s, it appears that the Americans had had enough in terms of their loss of market share

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and decided to enter into battle with the people in Europe. Of course, we all know the result of that. There has been a vicious crossfire in terms of export subsidies. Both of these agricultural superpowers have been prepared to make sales of various grains to importing countries in the rest of the world, at massively subsidized prices. In effect, they are giving away a bushel of wheat for every bushel that an importing nation is prepared to purchase. The result has been a collapse in the world grain prices and very difficult circumstances for Canadian producers. Clearly, it is a buyer's market and has been for some time.

We, in Canada, have a very massive grain handling and transportation system which has developed over many years. It is a system which moves the grain from the prairie farm to the grain elevators by rail, road, canal, river, and ultimately by sea. There are some 37 unions which are involved, we are told, in the handling and transportation of grain at some point in the system and, of course, there are a great number of employers, the railways, the elevator companies, the ports, and so on. Each and every one of these entities, management and labour alike, represents an important cog in the wheel or link in the chain which moves the grain from the prairie farms to export.

Any one of these cogs or links is capable of breaking down and causing a stoppage in that vital flow of grain. When that happens, when the collective bargaining process breaks down and the problems between labour and management are not capable of being resolved in the usual collective bargaining process, a strike or lock-out results.

The question then is, who bears the cost? Unfortunately, it is not the parties in the collective bargaining process. It is not the companies and it is not the workers. Regrettably, it is prairie farmers and ultimately the Canadian public because when the market-place is not working, and it certainly is not working at the present time, it is the Canadian public who has to support the agricultural community, in this particular case the prairie grain and oilseeds sector, through the Canadian treasury. Something in the order of \$20 billion, over the past six years, has been paid out to that sector and, unfortunately, because of market conditions more will be required.

The point of this bill today is to try to focus on this problem. Both sides of the dispute, labour and manage-