

Grain

hands up in the air and says, "What do you expect me to do." He should not wonder what he should do. What in the world is he doing there? He might be a very good fellow, but if he is not doing a good job let someone do something about it. I do not think a country such as Canada can afford, in a situation of this kind, to have a member from Montreal trying to represent western Canada. If he does not know what he is supposed to do, then for God's sake let the government put someone in there who does know what to do.

It appears to me that the government is doing everything it can to kill the goose that laid the golden egg. I suggest that we let our mind wander back not too many years. The government in office at that time had western Canada stripped right down. But under a Conservative government the farmer of western Canada was given an opportunity. Look how quickly that government put all the factories to work and everything began to move. The unemployment situation was cured. But look at the predicament in which western Canada is today. Where has the buying power gone? All one need do is look at the record of machinery sales. I believe these are some of the things the government should consider. Not only the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce but also the Minister without Portfolio should realize the seriousness of the situation, as should the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Olson).

I was home during the holidays and never before have I seen a situation in my constituency as serious as that which exists today. Yet members opposite sit here tonight and laugh. This is not funny; this is a serious situation. We have heard about the seriousness of the situation in Vancouver. We heard from the hon. member for Vancouver East (Mr. Winch). He certainly knows something about the situation in Vancouver harbour. I had the opportunity to see what a really great institution that is for handling grain. If the grain is not moving and we have to pay demurrage charges, then they will have to come out of the price we receive for the wheat. It only brings \$1 a bushel. My father received twice that much 30 years ago for a bushel of wheat. How can a farmer carry on in this day and age when that is all he can get for his wheat, and out of that he has to pay all this demurrage expense.

I was very happy that Mr. Speaker allowed this debate to take place. I feel it is very important that the people whom I represent should have heard from me on this important

[Mr. Cadieu.]

subject. The Minister of Agriculture and others have heard the plea from one of the former prime ministers that they should go out there and look into the seriousness of the situation. If they do not think it is serious, let them come to Meadow Lake. I will show them, and I will also show them some letters I have received. Many farmers will be in serious difficulty when they come to put in new crops. This is something that should be considered. I heard a very good suggestion today. The government should encourage elevator companies to instal grain drying equipment.

• (1:00 a.m.)

During the Christmas recess I discovered that a lot of small dryers are not operating efficiently. I discovered that a great deal of grain has not been dried properly and has been rejected. A great deal of grain in western Canada has been overdried or burnt. Farmers cannot sell this grain. Most of the farmers do not want to spend another 20 cents per bushel on this wheat because they feel they cannot sell it.

If anyone thinks this situation is not serious he should go out and observe it first hand. This government should be worried about the situation. It is not a laughing matter that we are here at this time of the morning. It is very important to the western farmer that the government take some action when the farmer is saddled with tough and damp grain.

Mr. Arnold Peters (Timiskaming): Mr. Speaker, the hour is getting late. I do not represent a western Canadian farm riding but I have been very interested in this debate and I hope the government has learned something. I note that the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Olson) and other long standing members of the agriculture committee are standing outside the curtain. They must know that over the years agricultural problems have changed. These problems have been brought to the attention of the government since I have been here but the government has found no solution.

The new minister from Saskatchewan has suggested that somebody has pushed the panic button. This is a very interesting remark, particularly to the unemployed in this country. I suggest the minister is unemployed, but the farmer in this country is not interested in that fact. He has too much to think about because of his own problems.