

*Grain*

communication, but in this case what we require is some action.

Let me describe the situation briefly to the house. According to the information I have, 20 ships lay at anchor in the inner and outer harbours at Vancouver. I am told that 19 of those ships are waiting to load grain. Fifteen of those ships are waiting to load higher grades, particularly No. 2. A few ships which arrived in Vancouver in December have made new arrangements to load lower grades of grain.

I have also received information that ten million bushels of grain are loaded and on the way to Vancouver. Of this amount 5,500,000 bushels are No. 2 Northern. These figures may not be exact, but this is the general situation which exists at this time. I have also been informed that the type of grain required is not in position and that from 200 to 400 cars are being unloaded per day at these terminals on the west coast. Last Saturday these terminals did not operate because there were not enough cars. These terminals are capable of unloading 600 cars per day.

In spite of these figures, we are in a better position at the port of Vancouver than we were several years ago when a similar situation occurred because the new Saskatchewan Pool terminal, with its great capacity, is available for the movement of grain through that port.

• (8:30 p.m.)

If we look at the other end of the grain picture we see that at the lakehead there are in store 41 million bushels of grain. The total capacity of the storage facilities is 90 million bushels. No one has explained why that capacity is not being used and storage space remains idle. It should be filled. We should be moving grain into the lakehead for the purpose of ensuring that the dryers keep operating and the grain is stored until the summer months when the weather warms up and drying could continue.

Let us look at the car loadings picture. I will give the house the figures for a five weeks comparison as between 1968 and 1967. In 1967, in the five weeks from December 6 to January 3, according to the Board of Grain Commissioners we moved 28,696 carloads of all grains. In 1968 in the same 5 week period we loaded 21,311 cars with all grains. There is a difference there of 7,385 cars in a five-week period. I would like to know why we moved less grain this year than we did in a similar period last year.

It is important that we get the answers to these questions tonight. It is more important that action be taken to solve the problem. There are some extenuating circumstances in this situation. We all know there are large quantities of grain with which we have to contend. I expect that the Canadian Wheat Board has made additional sales as a result of the strike at the gulf ports of the United States. I expect that additional sales have been made for one or two other reasons.

However, Mr. Speaker, there is no reason why we should not meet these conditions. We must be prepared to meet such conditions when they exist. We should gear our transportation system so we can meet this kind of emergency and deliver the product that we have for sale. We on the prairies operate at the end of a long pipe line and it is absolutely essential that this pipe line operate efficiently. It is of little avail to tell our farmers to be efficient, which they are, and to operate on very narrow margins, which they do, if the rest of the grain-handling industry is not efficient enough to move its product to the market when it is ready to be moved. This is what we are talking about tonight, the efficiency of our transportation and grain-handling system.

I am reliably informed that there is dry wheat at inland terminals which has not even been moved to the west coast to meet this demand. We should be using unit trains and making an all-out effort to meet the circumstances that exist. The failure to plan adequately to meet this situation is evident. We are in a highly competitive world market. We have always lived with the situation of being in a highly competitive world market. We know that this situation exists. We have known since the Kennedy round negotiations were completed that we would be in a tough marketing and negotiating position. This was evident. No sooner were those negotiations completed than the Americans and the French were cutting prices and we were fighting for markets. This should have been an added reason for being on our toes and missing no bets whatsoever.

When one considers the situation that exists on the west coast and at the lakehead, one has serious reservations as to how well the job is being done. I speak as a farmer whose neighbors have grain stacked up on their farms and whose very livelihood and well-being depends on the grain being moved to the market and being sold. We are not satisfied with the answers we have received