

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Crowfoot will be recognized for a supplementary and then the hon. member for Saint-Hyacinthe.

Mr. Horner (Crowfoot): Mr. Speaker, I am worried about the popularity of the Minister of Agriculture, and for this reason I will direct a supplementary question to him. Would he consider spending the \$3 million a week that he is now spending in an attempt to save the livestock industry on the price of feed grain, which would not interfere with the marketing of the end product?

Mr. Whelan: Mr. Speaker, we have certainly taken a look at this suggestion, which has been made not only by the hon. member for Crowfoot but by other people in western Canada. I have met many different people in western Canada who are concerned with the beef feeding industry, and if the hon. member can find any really unanimous point of view on this subject he is better than I am, because I certainly cannot.

* * *

[Translation]

HARBOURS

PORT OF MONTREAL—MEASURES TO ENSURE SHIPMENT OF GRAIN NOT INTERRUPTED BY LABOUR DISPUTE

Mr. Claude Wagner (Saint-Hyacinthe): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Transport.

Although he stated openly that his own problems and those of his department were plenty, could he say what immediate measures he and his colleagues of the cabinet are considering to make sure that the port of Montreal will not be condemned to a complete shut-off or continued jeopardy because of the present situation which makes it less and less profitable?

Hon. Jean Marchand (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. member for Saint-Hyacinthe wrapped it up in the over-all policy of the department. The question is much simpler. What is the situation at the port of Montreal? An extremely serious one. We are trying to solve it. Dock workers in Montreal harbour are numerous considering modern technology. It must be determined how to solve this problem. We have not yet found the solution and if the member for Saint-Hyacinthe has any suggestions, I shall listen to them.

Mr. Wagner: I wish to direct a supplementary question to the Minister of Transport.

I suggest that the government resign and give way to a responsible party capable of governing the country.

Having answered the Postmaster General, rather the Minister of Transport who perhaps will become the Postmaster General, I ask him the following question: in the event of a strike or a work slowdown by the Seafarers' International Union, does the minister intend to set up an inquiry or use some means to find alternative transportation for continued shipment of grain to Quebec?

Mr. Marchand (Langelier): Mr. Speaker, as I have spent 23 years of my life in the labour world, the hon. member for Saint-Hyacinthe can rest assured that I will surely not

Oral Questions

reveal in advance the means of breaking down the will of the workers so as to maintain conditions they cannot accept.

* * *

● (1440)

[English]

TRANSPORT

STATUTORY DUTY OF RAILWAYS TO CARRY WHEAT

Mr. G. W. Baldwin (Peace River): Mr. Speaker, in light of the minister's statement that the railways are not interested in buying hopper cars to transport wheat because they lose money, has he pointed out to the railway companies that they have a mandatory and statutory duty cast upon them under the provisions of the Railway Act to provide suitable accommodation and, with due care and diligence, receive carry and deliver all such traffic? Has the minister pointed that out to the railway companies and is he prepared to carry out his constitutional responsibility to see that the law is observed?

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Jean Marchand (Minister of Transport): Everyone may applaud, Mr. Speaker, but there is something lacking in the law which you will see if you read it, and I am sure the hon. member has done so. They have a legal statutory obligation to move grain, but there is no time limit.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Marchand (Langelier): That is not provided in the law. There is no time limit. There is nothing to compel them to buy up to date equipment with which to really move the grain in due course and in due time. That is why we have this problem in respect of hopper cars and why we as a government must solve it when normally the railway companies should probably do it.

Mr. Baldwin: On a point of order—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I understand the hon. member is rising on a point of order, but I will have to seek the co-operation of hon. members again as we will soon be running short of time.

Mr. Baldwin: Mr. Speaker, my point of order is very simple. The minister did not respond when I read to him the statement of the law that the railways must carry grain with due diligence and without delay, which constitutes a statutory obligation on them.

Mr. Marchand (Langelier): This is probably a legal point and, fortunately or unfortunately, I am not a lawyer, but in reference to the phrase "with all diligence and without delay" they can always say that is what they are doing with the equipment they have.

Mr. Baldwin: They have to buy more equipment.

An hon. Member: You are the minister, tell them.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!