

find solutions, for the hon. member for Joliette had none to suggest. To his credit, I must say that the hon. member for Bellechasse has at least tried, although with limited success, to make concrete suggestions for solving this problem. And I want to say, not only to the hon. members for Bellechasse and Joliette, but also to all other members present in this House, that the government has assumed its responsibilities in connection with this problem; in fact, we did not wait for this special debate in the House to act and, although this may not be very pleasant for certain hon. members of the Opposition to hear, I am going to quote figures and indicate steps which were taken by the government over the past few days to try and solve this problem.

● (2100)

I have something else to say, particularly to the hon. member for Joliette (Mr. La Salle) who persisted in putting all the blame on the government and especially on Liberal members from Quebec. The hon. members for Bellechasse and Joliette stressed the fact that they had spoken today to the president of APU, Mr. Couture. I also spoke with the president of APU today. But to make it a point of honour to have contacted the president of APU today is really, in my opinion, vacuousness.

I say that every day of the week several Liberal members of the House, be it the member for Frontenac (Mr. Corriveau), the member for Richelieu (Mr. Côté), the member for Laval (Mr. Roy), the member for Gatineau (Mr. Clermont), the member for Compton (Mr. Tessier), the member for Lac-Saint-Jean (Mr. Lessard), the member for Portneuf (Mr. Bussi eres), the member for Charlevoix (Mr. Lapointe), the member for Bonaventure-Îles-de-la-Madeleine (Mr. B echard), and the list is surely not complete, are concerned about the problem. I see the hon. member for Sherbrooke (Mr. Pelletier) who is behind me. All those members look actively after Quebec farm problems and speak regularly throughout the week either to the president or to members of the APU executive.

I see the hon. member for Matane (Mr. De Ban e) and the hon. member for Beauce (Mr. Carron) who took an active part with me and with other members I already mentioned and others who are not here tonight, in meetings with various farm groups from Quebec. Madam Speaker, the hon. member for Joliette has no lesson to teach us on that score.

Madam Speaker, I have only one other thing to say to the hon. member for Joliette. To hear him speak, one would think that the government is depriving farmers of their grain on purpose.

**Mr. Boulanger:** That is nasty.

**Mr. Ouellet:** According to the substance of his remarks, the government is to blame for its failure to take action. Little or no mention was made of the real problem—the real cause of this difficulty, of the longshoremen's strike in the Quebec, Trois-Rivi eres and Montreal ports.

Madam Speaker, to blame the government as a whole because this strike is not settled yet does not take a lot of imagination. Does that mean that the hon. member wants to deprive the workers in those ports of the right to strike? Does that mean that the longshoremen should not have

### *Feed Grain*

the right to strike? Does that mean that regardless of the workers' wage demands, regardless of their claims, the government should readily comply with them? They are irresponsible demands in some cases. Does that mean that every time a conflict may arise, since the interests of certain groups might be affected, the government should abdicate its responsibilities in an irresponsible way and settle at any cost the labour dispute?

The hon. member for Joliette did not have the smallest element of solution to suggest in this labour dispute which is nevertheless very important.

I think it would be advisable to enumerate the actions taken by the government these last days to bring elements of solution to the problem. We know that, precisely to help the supply, the government rerouted a ship so that it would unload its cargo at Prescott, a cargo of 825,000 bushels. More than 150,000 bushels have already been delivered to the province of Quebec. This is something that has been done in that field.

I would like to echo the remarks of the hon. member for Bellechasse (Mr. Lambert) who mentioned in his comments certain figures concerning supplies in the port of Quebec. I do not have any reason not to believe that the majority of those figures are exact, that is that a cargo has recently been unloaded in the port of Quebec, so that there are now some 719,000 bushels in the port. It is true that some 498,000 bushels of American corn constitute the most important part of that reserve.

And the hon. member is probably right in saying that this corn could be used but could also disturb the normal feeding methods.

Those bushels are there and they could be used if an agreement could be reached to allow the millers to cross the picket lines and go and get the grains.

I may say also that there are more than a million bushels in the Port of Trois-Rivi eres, some 211,000 bushels in the port of Sorel and more than 2,724,000 bushels in the port of Montreal.

I do not know if the hon. member for Dartmouth-Halifax East (Mr. Forrestall) ate corn before coming to the House, but I think he should better listen carefully to what I say, because we are trying tonight to find some elements of solution to this serious problem. And I agree with the hon. members for Bellechasse and Joliette, and with the other members on this side of the House who said that the situation was serious, that every effort must be made to enable the millers in Quebec to lay hands on the grains that are now stored in Quebec ports.

The figures I just gave show that there are grains in sufficient quantities for about a month. At the same time, I can assure the members that three ships are now sailing towards eastern Canada and St. Lawrence ports loaded with more than one million bushels. Which might also help to solve the problem.

However, I would like to remind the hon. members that yesterday, grain handlers in Montreal voted against a work stoppage. Of course, that alone does not solve the problem, but it is something encouraging, one less obstacle, and an important sign in the present conflict at the ports of Montreal, Trois-Rivi eres and Quebec City.