

Adjournment Debate

provincial agricultural ministers in terms of telling them what the feed grain policy was. They similarly ignored a meeting of the four western premiers of the areas in which the feed grain is produced. They ignored telling parliament what the feed grain policy was and took the opportunity late in the day when the press was not there to sneak into the Regina Inn and announce their feed grain policy. That shows how much confidence the government has in its feed grain policy. The matter ought to be aired in this House and in the standing committee as soon as possible.

That policy takes away a certain amount of control from the Wheat Board and the west loses its natural advantage in terms of farm production. Then the government had the audacity to move that the Export and Import Permits Act have control over the import of grains into Canada, and that this control be taken away from the Wheat Board. Although that policy has not been criticized too much—and probably that is our fault—it probably is one of the strongest moves by the forces of conservatism to take away the forces of orderly marketing from the Canadian Wheat Board.

Finally, may I say that in the world situation as it is today, and with the desperate situation in which many of our buying countries find themselves in trying to meet the price—buying countries which have been prepared to make 3, 4 and 5-year agreements to buy grain—we have an opportunity as a supplying nation to once again take the initiative in bringing world order into the marketing of grain and to enunciate in this House for the farmers of Canada a clear and definite statement on the approach we are taking to the establishment of an international wheat agreement and an international grains agreement.

[Translation]

Mr. Léopold Corriveau (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, I am glad to answer the hon. member in the name of the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Whelan).

The hon. member's question of July 23, 1973, to the Minister of Agriculture was whether or not the minister would make a statement on motions. The minister's answer, Mr. Speaker, is still the same; he is considering the matter.

The minister has already established that a type of agreement on grains is under study. It might be important to remind the hon. member of two facts: first, that international agreements were not always concluded to the satisfaction of Canadian producers and, second, that it is not always judicious to reveal to the persons we are negotiating with the state of our position before time, if this time ever comes. Canada still continues to hold its position concerning an efficient international wheat agreement, as previously agreed, but, apparently, several of the main parties to this agreement are still not ready to start the necessary discussions.

I do not think any other comments are necessary, Mr. Speaker.

[Mr. Knight.]

[English]

LABOUR RELATIONS—SUGGESTED ESTABLISHMENT OF
PUBLIC INTEREST DISPUTES COMMISSION—
GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mr. Don Blenkarn (Peel South): Mr. Speaker, on the day we came back, August 30, I asked the Prime Minister if the government had any intention of introducing legislation along the lines recommended by the Woods Commission in 1968, and in particular with regard to a public interest disputes commission.

In 1966 we had a national railroad strike and parliament was recalled. The usual legislation for compulsory arbitration was banged through, and as a result of that the late Right Hon. Lester B. Pearson established the Woods Commission to inquire into methods by which we could more properly handle Canadian industrial relations. That task force made an exhaustive study of industrial relations and produced a 100,000 word report. That report cost this country \$1.5 million.

On receipt of that report the then Minister of Labour, the Hon. Bryce Mackasey, said he would study it and might prepare some legislation, but that might take a year or so. One year went by, another year went by and several more years went by. Last year we had to come back again, and this year we had to come back again, produce ad hoc methods and go through the ritual dance, settling another industrial dispute in an area of essential service.

The Woods Commission recommended a public interest disputes commission, and to give this House some concept of what that might do I make these suggestions. The commission at the outset would be independent, not representing labour or management but representing the public and the public interest. That commission would determine what industry and what part of the industry or service is absolutely essential in the public interest. The commission might suggest in respect of railways, for example, that passenger trains are not essential and a strike may take place in some part of the country in that area. It would obviously decide that ferry services are necessary, and that it is necessary to move food to the north, to move grain shipments and perhaps certain bulk products to keep our industrial machine going.

Perhaps the commission would decide that certain strikes could be held on a limited basis. It might also determine special procedures whereby certain standards could be established in the case of wage disputes. For example, it might decide in respect of the railways that the durable goods industry's average wage payment scale might be the pay scale applicable. In respect of air controllers it might decide that the pay scale should be similar to that of employed lawyers, or something of the sort. This would be the purpose of the commission, to set guidelines and determine in the public interest which services are essential.

The commission might recommend to the government that a dispute cannot be allowed to continue any longer, that recommendation being made public, or it might allow a partial discontinuance of service. It might decide that if a union did not co-operate there should be a trusteeship, or that if a company would not co-operate there should be a seizure of its assets.