

*Adjournment Debate*

[Translation]

**Mr. Gilles Marceau (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Justice):** Mr. Speaker, the issue raised this evening enables me to repeat the answer already given by the minister and to add further comments: I quote

The fact is that a good number of organizations have expressed themselves on both sides of the feed grains questions, which is specifically the reason for the period of discussion we initiated with our announcement on August 3. It was significant that the Canadian Federation of Agriculture expressly avoided arriving at a conclusion on the issue because of the known division among farm organizations on the subject. It is our continued objective to ensure that there be equitable pricing and movement of feed grains across the country on a one market basis.

[English]

Mr. Speaker, the hon. member's question refers to the so-called plebiscite or poll being conducted in Manitoba in connection with the domestic marketing of feed grains. Responsible people in the grain industry, including producers, recognize this so-called poll for what it really is, a patently obvious political ploy of little significant consequence. It makes no contribution to the solution of the difficult problems in the domestic marketing of feed grain.

The government has received a host of suggestions on the proposals put forward August 3, from farmers and farm organizations right across the country. Each of these is receiving close scrutiny in an effort to arrive at the best possible solution. Very few of the suggestions have at this stage been rejected. All alternatives are being looked at. We expect soon to complete this very thorough period of consultation and to come forward with our final proposals which we believe will be the best possible in the very difficult circumstances which apply to the domestic production and use of feed grains within Canada.

[Translation]

I thank the hon. member who dealt so efficiently and wisely with this question—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

[English]

GRAIN—RESPONSIBILITY FOR ALLOCATION OF RAILWAY  
CARS—DECLARATION OF CERTAIN BRANCH LINES AS  
INOPERATIVE BECAUSE OF SNOW CONDITIONS

**Mr. Frank Hamilton (Swift Current-Maple Creek):** Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight to pursue a question I put to the Minister in charge of the Canadian Wheat Board when I asked him on March 26 who was responsible for ordering grain trains into the snow-blocked areas of the prairies. On a subject with which I am familiar, I listened to the minister's long, convoluted answer and I was absolutely mystified. Then I waited until I had an opportunity to read his reply. I really think that the producers in western Canada deserve a better shake than the tricky answer given by him.

The transportation snarl-up started last fall. It was the same old story. The Canadian Wheat Board told the railways that certain areas would be short of grain and that it required all lines to be kept open all winter. The facts are that the Canadian Wheat Board has been ordering trains into the snow-blocked areas with the result that we have had some 16,000 cars tied up. The railways have been

required to plow over a quarter million miles of track and we have ended up dissipating our whole transportation effort, moving snow rather than wheat and grain.

Grain accounts for over 50 per cent of the total railway traffic in western Canada. In effect, we have been hung-up on an old principle out there which holds that all parts of the prairies, all producers, all delivery points must have the same delivery opportunities every week of the year. This has resulted in the dissipation of our entire effort. We should have sent the trains into areas that were accessible, taken the grain out of them during the winter and levelled up the quotas when spring arrived.

Some ten days ago the railways took a very definite stand. They took some 20 subdivisions out of operation. Why it took them so long to do that, I can only guess. It is interesting to read the railways' statement, made yesterday in Winnipeg, as quoted in the *Globe and Mail*. Of course, the railways have been the favourite whipping-boy of the grain trade over the years. The new stance of the railways is as follows:

CP rail will start running four special grain trains from the prairies to Vancouver in an effort to accelerate Canada's export shipments, according to F. S. Burbidge, CP president.

● (2220)

This rail movement will be the second largest in the company's history, being exceeded only by the grain volume carried during the 1971-72 crop year.

The article ends with this significant paragraph:

Mr. Burbidge said the success of CP's plans depends not only on the weather, but also on obtaining the fullest co-operation from grain producers, elevator operators and the Wheat Board.

I wish the minister well, because I know the problems he will encounter in trying to get action from those segments of the industry. I think this is a wise decision. The railways are going to haul from selected lines. This will require trucking the grain to those lines, and I know the minister is very well acquainted with some of the problems involved. There are segments of our grain industry which would like to see the trucking experiment fail. Right now they are trucking to the interior terminals and this is costing the producer some 12½ cents per bushel just to deliver to the terminals. It costs 5.7 cents at the elevator and another 6.9 cents per bushel to haul it within a 30-mile radius.

I see nothing wrong with allowing producers to haul directly to those terminals, thus bypassing the additional 12½ cents charge. I think some incentive must be offered to producers to induce them to transport their grain to those open lines, however. I suggest to the Minister that he consider paying a 10-cent or 12-cent per bushel subsidy to encourage grain onto these main lines.

I should like to say a few words about the target figures set by the Canadian Wheat Board and the railways. The figures offered by the railway people and the Wheat Board do not agree. Today in committee Canadian Transport Commission officials appeared and they were not able to help. I suggest that the target figures set by the Canadian Wheat Board are not credible. At the end of the last crop year, when all the grain that was required to be moved had been moved, we were still some 30,000 boxcars short of