

Grain Shipments

The hon. member for Churchill (Mr. Smith) pointed out to the House tonight that the facilities at the port of Churchill are not being used to capacity. To move grain from Scott, Saskatchewan, to Rotterdam via Churchill rather than the Pacific coast means a saving of 15 cents per bushel; via the east coast the saving is 32 cents per bushel; via the St. Lawrence ports there is an 18 cent per bushel saving, and via Thunder Bay and direct overseas the saving is 11 cents per bushel.

As a result of the strike has the government considered what is wrong in Vancouver and our other ports, and what interim and long term changes should be made? I want to say to the House again that the right to strike today is damaging, and the short term benefits achieved do not make up for the damage the workers sustain. For every right in democracy there is a corresponding and correlating responsibility. It is time that society look not only at rights but at responsibilities, and we seem to have moved away from that point. It is time that this government showed leadership and responsibility and, Mr. Speaker, I believe the Canadian public would recognize that responsibility and follow it.

● (0310)

Mr. Frank Maine (Wellington): Madam Speaker, it is gratifying to see you occupying the chair at this late hour. In International Women's Year it is gratifying to demonstrate to the opposition that our women work as long and hard as their male counterparts.

Mr. Nowlan: That's a pretty good start for your maiden speech.

Mr. Maine: The hon. member for Annapolis Valley (Mr. Nowlan) has added his comment to the debate. He is a good example to bad drivers—putting his mouth in motion before putting his brain in gear. The Conservative motion, in referring to the strike which has been settled, flogs a dead horse. But that is not unusual. That party has been flogging dead horses for years. For the benefit of those who say they are concerned about strikes, I draw the attention of the House to notice of motion No. 48 on the order paper, standing in my name, which reads:

That, in the opinion of this House, the government should give consideration to the appointment of a special committee of this House for the purpose of finding an alternative to the use of strikes for settling labour-management disputes and thereby protect innocent third parties whose lives are disrupted during strikes in both the private and public sectors of the economy which threaten to be more serious than in past years owing to the large number of contracts to be renewed in the current year.

I know the Finkelman report deals with strikes in the public service, but we must also be concerned about strikes in the private sector. If hon. members opposite are serious in what they say, they will convince their leaders to ask for my notice of motion to be debated as soon as possible, and passed, so that the serious problem with which it deals can be tackled.

Last evening at six o'clock I spoke to the chairman of my local agricultural committee. I asked, how is the strike situation affecting farmers in Ontario? He said, "It is not affecting farmers in Ontario or farmers in Wellington riding, but the people in Canada are concerned because strikes are hindering the delivery of food to deprived

[Mr. Epp.]

people in other countries." He, himself, was concerned about the effect the strike would have on prairie farmers and about the loss of money to their economy. Compared with the losses resulting from the present strike situation, the losses we suffered from eggs are small indeed. An egg farmer on my local agricultural committee hoped that grain would soon move again: most importantly, he mentioned the rising antagonism of Ontario farmers to unions. Such antagonism is potentially disastrous.

It is now 3.15 a.m. I have been here since 8 p.m. of the previous evening. Not until 12.35 a.m. did I hear a constructive comment from the opposition. It was made not by a Conservative member, but by a Cr ditiste member, the hon. member for Rimouski (Mr. Allard). He made the first positive suggestion that I heard from the opposition. He talked about profit-sharing and guaranteed annual income. Perhaps the Cr ditistes woke up the Conservatives because after that the hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre (Mr. McKenzie) also mentioned profit sharing.

Mr. Whittaker: Madam Speaker, I wonder if the hon. member would permit a question.

Mr. Maine: Madam Speaker, I prefer to finish my speech first.

Mr. Nowlan: You are like Eugene Whelan, sitting and hearing nothing.

Mr. Maine: That is better than sitting and saying nothing, and I have been here all evening. The high points of the opposition's contribution were the suggestions made by the hon. member for Rimouski and the hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre. Then the debate sank to a low level when the hon. member for Battle River (Mr. Malone) gave a history lesson. He talked about the burden of demurrage charges on farmers as being something new and suggested farmers should be able to sue. But does not every strike, whether in the public or private sector, injure innocent third parties and cause inconvenience?

Whenever a strike occurs in industry, some innocent people are inconvenienced. Demurrage charges, placing a burden upon people who are not directly involved in strikes, are nothing new. This problem is not one which affects only the farmer. It is one which should be tackled in both the private and the public sector because the total number of people involved is so large. If western farmers opposite are really concerned for their industry they will persuade their leaders to agree to bringing my motion forward for immediate consideration so that we can come to grips with this issue in a manner which is fair to all concerned.

I ask the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) to join this debate and show some of the members of the Conservative Party the error of their ways.

Mr. Sean O'Sullivan (Hamilton-Wentworth): Madam Speaker, the points which I would have raised in a full speech on this motion have already been fully and adequately voiced by my hon. friends on this side of the chamber. As this important debate draws near its end, I simply wish to express on behalf of the official opposition, which took the initiative in bringing about this debate,