

Adjournment Debate

to his own seat and tell us definitively whether feed freight assistance in eastern Canada and in British Columbia is as inviolate as are the Crowsnest pass rates to western Canada, thus enabling us to stabilize our agricultural potential.

[Translation]

Mr. Léopold Corriveau (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, the question being debated now is very much like that which was asked by the hon. member for Richmond (Mr. Beaudoin); therefore my answer will be the same. The hon. member will find in the January 4, 1973 issue of *Hansard*, on page 6, the commitment made by the government in the Speech from the Throne:

The Government supports the principle of an equitable relationship of prices of feed grain to livestock feeders in various areas of Canada. It is the intention of the Government to implement before the next crop year, procedures that will ensure the optimum development of the feed grain and livestock industries within Canada.

I am confident, Mr. Speaker, that we shall fulfil this commitment. We are now having important discussions with various producer groups in order to ensure that they will be heard and that their views will be taken into consideration in seeking a solution. I am sure no hon. member would want decisions taken without consultation.

Mr. Speaker, the rise in production costs does worry me and the fact that this increase stems from a world shortage of feed grains and protein is of little consolation. However, I am happy that, at least this time, the price the consumer of feed grains receives for his products has also increased. Let us hope that the increase in the cost of production, in stock breeding, will be reflected in the profits of the grain and protein producer and help him stabilize his income and ensuring that he can produce even more feed grains next year.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I would say that everyone is very much aware of the seriousness of the situation and I know that a practical solution will soon be found.

[English]

GRAIN—PROVISION OF RAILWAY CARS TO POINTS WITH
LARGE SUPPLIES OF NON-BOARD GRAINS

Mr. Elias Nesdoly (Meadow Lake): Mr. Speaker, I am glad to see that the minister responsible for the Wheat Board is here tonight. On February 7, 1973, I asked a question regarding the movement of grain in western Canada, particularly in Saskatchewan. The reason I asked the question was that reports from Saskatchewan indicate there are about 150 delivery points in that province plugged up with grain. I have received a number of letters from my own constituency; one from Whitkow, Saskatchewan, which indicated that it has had a full elevator since December 11 and the last train passed through the village on November 29. There was a quota for several more bushels of grain but they could not haul any more as the elevator space was filled.

Let me indicate that I do not bring this matter forward tonight for the purpose of publicity, but because farmers in Saskatchewan generally are facing a real problem. I made several phone calls today to spot-check the situa-

[Mr. Nowlan.]

tion, and in all fairness to the minister I must say that there appears to be no problem in respect of grain movement at various points in my constituency.

They told me at Paradise Hill that grain is moving to about 90 per cent capacity with cars coming in. They are keeping up quite well. A similar statement was made in respect of some of the grain at Canwood, although they have missed the odd car occasionally. A similar statement was made in respect of Spiritwood, Shellbrook, Holbein and Bapaume. However, at about half the points I phoned there appeared to be problems with non-board grains or the oilseed crop which is rapeseed.

There also appears to be difficulty in respect of the movement of barley. I was told that at St. Walburg, for example, there was congestion in respect of barley to the extent of 49,000 bushels, and some 42,000 bushels of rapeseed. They only have 19,000 bushels of wheat on hand. It seems the wheat is moving well but rapeseed and barley are not being moved at all. The agent indicated to me, also, that trains are run whenever the railway feels like operating them. They say this is a real problem.

• (2220)

In respect of Turtleford, Saskatchewan, they say they have been filled up and congested every weekend since October 1972. They have space for only 4,000 bushels, with a capacity of 93,000 bushels. Barley is very congested, as also is rapeseed. They say they have only a four-car spot and they could use an eight-car spot. They tell me that this situation seems very difficult to change. At Meadow Lake, Saskatchewan, it seems that the problem is about the worst in the constituency I represent. Barley is really congested, with one of the pool elevators having 54,000 bushels of grain on hand and the others ranging from 70,000 to 100,000 bushels. Yet I understand there is a crying need for feed grain in certain parts of Canada. They also indicate that there is a lot of rapeseed on hand which has not been moving well for the last couple of months.

Glaslyn, Saskatchewan, has been congested since the start of the 1972 crop year. They state that rapeseed is really congested and just is not moving. When I spoke to them today on the telephone they told me that the movement of barley is bad too. It was indicated that they could use an eight-car spot instead of a four-car spot. Leask is congested right up to the 140,000 bushel capacity. There is congestion in respect of all grains. They say they are located on the line between North Battleford and Prince Albert and never know when the trains are coming.

This would seem to be typical of the situation in other parts of the country. Elevator agents do not know when to expect the trains. I think we are getting into a *de facto* abandonment of railway lines, as I mentioned in the House previously. I am told that shipments sometimes are three weeks behind schedule. I could mention several other points at which there are problems.

As I have said, there has been some good movement of grain in certain parts of the constituency but it appears that rape and barley are causing problems in certain areas and I would appreciate a response from the minister responsible for the Wheat Board as to the reason the situation exists and what steps he is taking to remedy it.