

GRAIN

REQUEST FOR ASSURANCE OF CONTINUOUS MOVEMENT

Mr. J. H. Horner (Crowfoot): I should like to direct a question to the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce. Can the Minister assure the house and the country that every effort will be made to ensure a continuous flow of grain from the terminals to the ships? A couple of months ago there was a pile-up of ships at Vancouver, yet today there are no ships at all waiting at that port. Can we have some assurance that this whole question is being examined very closely?

Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce): Mr. Speaker, I am afraid there will be a slowdown of ships coming into Vancouver for loading in the next couple of weeks.

Mr. Woolliams: That will help the government.

Mr. Pepin: I am afraid the Japanese and the Chinese importers have been listening to the opposition in this matter rather than to me. The tie-up that existed in the port of Vancouver a few weeks ago has been cleared more rapidly than the opposition expected it would.

Mr. Diefenbaker: After seven weeks.

Mr. Pepin: I understood the right hon. member for Prince Albert had said it would not be cleared till the end of May or June, but in any event it has been cleared now. The Wheat Board and the trade are doing their best to see that ships from Japan and China are made available for loading. There is no lack of sales on the west coast at this time.

Mr. McKinley: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Horner: I have a supplementary question which I will direct—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member for Huron is rising on a point of order.

Mr. McKinley: I suggest that the port of Vancouver has been cleared of ships because of the action of the opposition.

Mr. Speaker: That is hardly a point of order. The hon. member for Crowfoot on a supplementary.

Inquiries of the Ministry

Mr. Horner: People all across Canada will be pleased to hear that there is no shortage of ships, but we are very discouraged that—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. We should not have a debate at this time. If hon. members are allowed to ask questions and ministers to—

Mr. Horner: Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I will recognize the hon. member, but he knows perfectly well that only a few minutes are allocated to the house every day for the consideration of questions asked by hon. members.

Mr. Horner: Forgive me for adding one word of introduction to my question, Mr. Speaker, but in view of the minister's reply I could not help but do so. My question is this: There is no shortage of ships, the minister says, but is enough being done? There is a widespread belief that there will not be a boat into Vancouver until April 25—

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Horner: —one month from today. Surely with no shortage of ships, somebody—

Mr. Speaker: Order. This is obviously argument.

Mr. G. W. Baldwin (Peace River): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the minister, or possibly for the Minister of Transport. In view of the very alarming and disastrous situation in northern Alberta and northern Saskatchewan in regard to damp grain and the inability to move this grain, with the possibility that by spring it will have deteriorated and be badly damaged, will the Minister or the Minister of Transport give special and very urgent consideration to discussing with the railways the provision of box cars in these areas?

Mr. Pepin: Mr. Speaker, this is being done. If the hon. member has some specific cases in mind I will gladly take note of them.

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Prince Albert): A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Since the minister is in such a fine mood for answering questions today, may I ask him what is the projection until April 25 of the expected number of ships that will arrive in Vancouver to move wheat? He must have that before him at this very moment.