

Maintenance of Ports Operations Act, 1986

everything in the Larson Report except the container clause or my referee will do it for you". Why should either party bother sitting down to negotiate all these other things when each one of them knows that all it has to do is to continue to disagree and the Minister will see to it that the issue is settled for them? I would think that the Minister should put in his Bill that this gun will not apply until after December 31, 1988 and only in those areas on which disagreement remains.

As a long-time member of the co-operative and credit union movement and a supporter, having been on boards of directors, credit committees and whatnot for many years, I regret having to say this but I always think that good friends if they cannot talk frankly to one another are not very good friends. I want to say frankly, as I have said to my friends in the wheat pool, what I think they did wrong in the case of the lock-out in Vancouver. The issue is the container clause.

I do not know of any potash or sulphur that gets shipped in containers. I have never heard of it. Maybe the odd time someone fills a container with it, but I would be damned surprised. I do not know of any logs or dimension lumber that goes into containers. I have never heard of it. I am told that some specialty manufactured and processed lumber products in small quantities have been loaded in containers. They might possibly number a few hundred out of tens of thousands a year. I do not know of any grain which is put in containers. I understand that, say, a 500-bushel lot of specialized crop seed can be put in a container. That might happen a few dozen times out of tens of thousands of container movements in the course of a year. Therefore, I fail to understand why the grain companies, the potash companies, the sulphur companies and the lumber companies were party to shutting down the entire Port of Vancouver. Each of those four groups handling heavy bulk commodities should have said, and can still say, for now and for the future, that they are not going to be party to the collective agreement regarding containers; they are not bound by the employers' association when it comes to a lock-out over containers.

• (1610)

What happened? Here are the grain producers of Alberta, the Peace River country of British Columbia, and the western half of Saskatchewan, members and shareholders of the Alberta Wheat Pool, the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool and the United Grain Growers, who have been told by their management and board of directors that they cannot deliver grain to their own terminals. Yet the dispute has absolutely nothing to do with the handling of grain. The same thing applies to the shipment of potash, sulphur, lumber and logs.

Another thing is that out of roughly 3,500 longshoremen, some full-time, part-time or casual, only about 100, as I understand it, are involved with ships handling grain, potash and sulphur. You need only about three or four men for about 12, 18 or maybe 24 hours in order to handle a grain ship. The overwhelming majority of longshoremen are involved in what is called general merchandise shipping. Whether it be a

freighter with a hold full of cars and trucks, containers, or bags of potato chips, it is general cargo which requires many more longshoremen. It has not been the longshoremen in Vancouver or Prince Rupert, or the grain handlers in Thunder Bay, who prevented western grain producers from shipping their grain. In Vancouver it was the companies who are owned and supposedly controlled by the producers who locked out those producers, not just the longshoremen. That needs to be said, and I hope the producers ask questions of the management and boards of directors of the companies which they have spent their lives building and which they own.

As well, I wish that the Minister and everyone else in this House, if nowhere else in the country, would stop calling it a work stoppage because that is not what it is. I repeat, it is not a work stoppage.

I want to say to the Minister that he and the referees he appoints had best take into account the concerns of the longshoremen on at least two or three items in the Larson Report. One of them, of course, is pensions. All Members of this House are aware of the volume of correspondence we get on pensions. Some of my colleagues and I have spent months and months on the CNR pension plan. There are several hundred plans which should be dealt with. This is not a matter of employment, this is a matter of how well you survive upon retirement because then you have no union to fight for you. You have no employer to be magnanimous. You are on your own. Therefore, anything dealing with their pensions will be fought for to the death. Indeed, I hope not, but maybe even to the point of disobeying the law.

Mr. St. Germain: Oh, now, now.

Mr. Benjamin: I said I hope not. I will try to help persuade people not to break the law, but you can only drive people so far. That has been proven so many, many times in our country's history, as well as that of many other countries. If pushed too far, people will rebel, even if it means breaking the law. Therefore, I urge the Minister to make sure he is a close adviser to the referee he appoints in order to avoid a lot more serious trouble further down the road.

The Larson Report also includes a provision for a 12-hour day. Here we are in Parliament and in Government frantically trying to get more jobs created and reduce unemployment, and this report recommends a 12-hour day in certain circumstances. That is incredible. It comes right out of the 1890s, right up to the 1920s. Therefore, I suggest to the Minister that, again, he had better closely advise his referee on that issue.

I hope the Minister or his Parliamentary Secretary, or some other member of the Government, will have second thoughts and want to make some changes to the legislation. There is one thing in the Bill, for example, which is very unfair, one-sided and biased. It is a clause which will likely never have to be used, but since we are talking about the principle of the Bill, this clause is a terrible principle. I refer to Clause 13(2) under Offences. It provides for a daily fine for officers and representatives of the union, and officers and representatives of the