

able to the institution called Parliament, in an attempt to make the government aware of a particular matter in order to bring about a precise solution. The government, through the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mr. Ouellet), tried to throw the ball back to the Opposition, superficially, and, I should say, without any apparent success. Surprisingly enough, he has even been contradicted several times by his colleague the Postmaster General (Mr. Mackasey) who—and I want to commend him for it—took a positive and logical position towards the disturbed work force of Canada.

An hon. Member: No wishy-washy he!

Mr. Fortin: Madam Speaker, it is regrettable of course that the Minister of Agriculture is not here tonight, but he was very well represented by his parliamentary secretary (Mr. Corriveau).

He told us the government had taken adequate measures to ensure feed grain supplies in Quebec, that they had sent ships, stopped ships, opened grain doors, closed elevators, mustered people, done some picketing as he so aptly said. But we are still waiting for a solution. Immediately after his illustrious and eloquent speech of apologies, his colleague from Beauce (Mr. Caron) says that after ten days the situation is now dramatic and that what is at stake is cattle feeding in Quebec. Their government colleague had stated earlier that opposition members were trying to play politics by asking questions, and that this debate was practically pointless. In the same breath, the hon. member for Beauce indicated that he and four or five other colleagues had been asking questions from the minister for the last few days.

How are we to reconcile this, Madam Speaker? If an opposition member is playing politics urging the minister of Agriculture to act in a dramatic situation, so does a member on the government side. I suggest also that when an opposition member puts a question to the minister and the member on the government side asks a similar question, and in both cases the minister does not act but simply submits that elevators are full and that the question is out of his hands, I feel that Quebecers were wrong in sending upwards of 60 liberal members to Parliament.

I would not want to show prejudice or divide the country, but there is something I must say, no matter what. In the eight years I have been a member of this House, we have been hearing of grain problems in Western Canada. A handful, or rather a good number of members from Western Canada—and let me emphasize they are not government members but opposition members—by holding together and making a stand and defending their area's interests and on a number of occasions they have managed to instigate emergency debates, force the government to act and bring about results for western Canada. To those who accuse me of partisanship, I shall say that we in Quebec have a talent to talk so little about Quebec's problems in this House that everytime we have that opportunity, a very limited one I must say, we systematically attack each other and display to other members of Parliament of this country the show of members of Parliament who forget the problems of their own provinces to uphold the interests of their own parties. That is the kind of show we have been witnessing tonight up to now, Madam

Feed Grain

Speaker, and that greatly disappoints me. In support of what I say, the hon. member for Frontenac (Mr. Corriveau) became irritated because somebody visited him in his constituency during the weekend. He would rather accuse the hon. member for Richmond (Mr. Beaudoin) a few moments ago than talk about the problem of supplies, and deliver a message of hope or suggest a practical solution. In that respect, the hon. member for Beauce (Mr. Caron) was right, the hon. member for Frontenac just said, after he read a speech which had been drafted by civil servants, that the hon. member for Richmond was being illogical, a citizen of Quebec attacking another citizen of Quebec. Madam Speaker, he said that the hon. member for Richmond, while inducing striking asbestos workers to maintain their strike, and that now, in the case of the longshoremen strike, wanted emergency legislation to be passed. He said the hon. member for Richmond approved of the strike in Thetford Mines, but that in the case of longshoremen he thought emergency legislation was absolutely needed.

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Madam Speaker, if the hon. member for Frontenac and parliamentary secretary (Mr. Corriveau) really believes that, which would have to be proven, he should realize that in the case of the asbestos strike, the common welfare of our population is not involved, but this conflict lasts and will go on lasting because it was caused by the Liberal party, maintained by the inaction of the Liberal party, and today, Madam Speaker, those people are asking for justice. However, in the case of the longshoremen's strike, for the information of the hon. member for Frontenac, the conflict really threatens the common welfare.

Having said that, I would like to emphasize one thing. I received today a telegram from the Farming Co-operative of Bois-Francs, Victoriaville, signed by its managing director, Mr. Marcel Pothier, and I quote:

Situation impossible in feed grain supplies. No shipment today from Quebec elevators despite injunction. Our trucks stopped today at Montreal elevator. Stikers strengthen their positions. Our stocks at a minimum about 12 hours' operation. Thunder Bay rail shipments completely disorganized. Request emergency action.

This completely contradicts the statement of the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mr. Ouellet) and the statement of the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Corriveau).

Even if this debate only allows us to learn the truth about the situation, it will represent a considerable gain for us. I received today also another telegram from the Poultry Producers' Federation of Quebec, and I quote:

Poultry Producers' Federation of Quebec includes all chicken and turkey producers in province of Quebec. Poultry producers alarmed by feed grain supply situation, caused by lack of access to national ports because of strikes. Supplies of producers will run out within 24 hours, request immediate action; otherwise, enormous losses will occur following lack of food.

That is another situation, further evidence that indicates the need to step in as quickly as possible. The common weal of the Quebec people is at stake. The matter is not, as the Postmaster General (Mr. Mackasey) said so eloquently and so justly, of passing emergency legislation every time a major problem, limited though it may be, arises. Tonight's sitting is perhaps evidence that our