

Movement of Grain

tion. While it may wish to do so, I think it would have to do so in regular ways, such as the examination of the minister upon his estimates, or by participation in a budget debate, which we know is going to begin later this week. There is nothing to stop discussion of it in parliament obviously, as was evidenced in the question period.

In order to qualify for consideration under Standing Order 26, however, something of an emergent nature or extraordinary nature would have to be demonstrated. Whether that would be in the nature of an irregularity or not, I am not sure, but in any case at this time—always without prejudice to the right of any member upon further information to apply again—upon the information available to me I do not consider it to be a proper subject for consideration as an emergency debate pursuant to Standing Order 26.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

ALLOTTED DAY, S.O. 58(11)—ALLEGED SHORTCOMINGS IN MOVEMENT OF GRAIN FOR EXPORT

Mr. Les Benjamin (Regina-Lake Centre) moved:

That this House condemns the government for its failure:

- (a) to require the railroads to add 4,000 hopper cars and 5,000 repaired boxcars to their grain fleet; and
- (b) to give the Canadian Wheat Board total authority to co-ordinate all aspects of grain movement and any other authority necessary to protect and expand grain exports.

Mr. Speaker: Members will note that proceedings on this motion expire in the ordinary course later this day pursuant to Standing Order 58(11).

Mr. Benjamin: Mr. Speaker, the purpose of this motion has been apparent during the course of the late summer and this fall. It was obvious in this chamber through the number of questions raised on the matter by members of the opposition parties.

Since we are faced with the requirement to move a record or equal to record volume of grain over the coming winter months, my colleagues and I thought this an appropriate motion through which to bring to the attention of parliament, as well as to the minister, some factors that have put Canada and Canadian producers into the present situation.

● (1512)

This is the situation in a nutshell. In spite of the fact that the minister and the government have provided 8,000 hopper cars, and I am certain he will mention this two or three times in his speech—by the way this was a measure supported by members on all sides of the House—we have a smaller capacity and capability to transport grain now than that existing at the end of 1972.

[Mr. Speaker.]

Further, the reason for the motion is to illustrate how the railroads have betrayed and double-crossed not only the Minister of Transport (Mr. Lang) but the taxpayers and the grain producers in western Canada. While the minister is busy telling us that all is well, in my opinion the railroads are on strike. They are threatening the Canadian Wheat Board's ability to compete for grain sales. When I say railroads on strike, I mean railroad management.

To put it mildly, the Canadian Wheat Board is the farmer's friend. It is doing a good job. It is doing the best possible job it can, but it needs more authority to co-ordinate grain movement in order to protect our present grain sales and to expand them. At present, sir, the Canadian Wheat Board is not in a position to take on new and additional contracts because our capability and our capacity to move grain to export positions has not increased, in spite of the contributions of the Canadian taxpayers. They have, in my opinion, decreased.

More than ever before the Canadian Wheat Board needs more authority. Yet I find this incredible situation where the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Clark) attacks the principle of orderly marketing in the Canadian Wheat Board itself.

An hon. Member: Shame!

Mr. Benjamin: It is bad enough that the Conservatives supported the minister in charge of the Wheat Board when he took feed grains away from the exclusive jurisdiction of the board. But the Leader of the Opposition said in August of last year that the private grain trade should be allowed to compete with the Canadian Wheat Board for export sales. The whole purpose of setting up the Wheat Board in the first place was to eliminate the private grain trade from export sales.

Mr. Mazankowski: Who set it up, the CCF?

Mr. Benjamin: That would lead to the ultimate destruction of orderly marketing in the Canadian Wheat Board. What R. B. Bennett gave in 1935, the present leader of the Conservative party is going to take away. The Wheat Board can sell wheat; it has sold wheat. It needs the support of everyone in this chamber, let alone everyone in this country in order to get on with the job. Let us not burden it with the so-called free market thinkers and, an unco-operative railroad system.

The advisory committee for the Wheat Board has said that transport delays in the last crop year damaged Canada's reputation as a supplier, and cost farmers \$150 million in lost grain sales. Canadian Wheat Board spokesmen are now saying that deferred sales so far this calendar year total \$350 million and that demurrage charges on ships, mostly waiting in Vancouver harbour, will add another \$25 million.

Deferred sales is a nice term for lost sales, or sales for which we did not apply because of the Board's knowledge of our inability to meet those commitments. That is money out of the farmers' pockets. It is a lost opportunity for the Canadian economy. It is money out of the Canadian economy. We cannot expand grain sales because of transport constraints. Once more, once we get behind in shipments of grain, we stay