

pointing out three needed requirements to bring about some relief. It suggested that rail rolling stock is declining, rail capacity through the mountains is limited, particularly during the winter when cars are available and demand is the heaviest, and that the terminal capacity on the west coast is not adequate to buffer present shipping variations or to meet the increased requirements of importers in the future. I am referring to an address which was given by Mr. Harold F. Bjarnason, senior economist of the Canadian Wheat Board, before the Canada Grains Council meeting in Calgary on October 18.

To counter that, we have heard claims by the railways of underutilization of railway capacity. At the present time there are suggestions which indicate that only 50 per cent to 70 per cent of railway capacity is being utilized en route to Thunder Bay, and 40 per cent to 60 per cent is being utilized en route to Vancouver. Those statements seem to conflict. They bear close scrutiny and study. There have been labour problems which affected the Port of Churchill. There were two labour disruptions which affected the Port of Thunder Bay. In some measure that disruption resulted in the differential of 2.3 million tonnes of grain between this calendar year and next. Translated into dollars and cents, it amounts to approximately \$350 million to \$400 million of loss to Canadian producers.

The Canadian Wheat Board study of the last crop year, which was attested to by its senior economist, Mr. Bjarnason, indicated that we could have sold 25 million tonnes of grain if we had the capacity to move that amount. As it was, we settled for sales in the order of just over 21 million tonnes. That four million tonnes represent a direct loss to the Canadian economy of approximately \$500 million. There is a major breakdown in the system. Unless we do something immediately to turn this situation around and correct it, Canada will face the prospect of losing its traditional position of leader in the forefront of world export trade.

We must address ourselves to two matters immediately. First, we should clean up our act immediately. We must utilize to the maximum the existing facilities and capacities. A number of suggested solutions have been advanced, some of which are being considered, some of which have been implemented partially, and some of which are not being considered. Second, we must build in sufficient additional capacity to meet the market projections of the 1980s. We are looking at a very significant quantum leap in our ability to move grain to export markets.

Rather than pointing the finger at the railways, Canadian Wheat Board, or grain companies, I hope we can rationalize this issue in a serious and sensible manner. Structural changes are required, and perhaps there should be changes respecting detail.

I should like to advance some solutions, solutions which can be implemented in the immediate future, and some which will assist us in addressing the challenges of the future. First of all, it has become increasingly clear that we need a minister who can spend more time and give more attention to this very serious problem. I have no qualms about the minister's ability in discharging his responsibilities, but I think, in all fairness

### *Movement of Grain*

the farmers in western Canada, indeed, the agricultural sector itself deserves a minister who can spend more time and provide more leadership in addressing this very important issue.

● (1612)

We have studied this system almost to death. There are some very concrete suggestions and solutions that have been advanced by the Hall commission, and my colleagues will be talking about them throughout the course of the debate. We have appointed co-ordinators, commissions, and have had all kinds of studies. It is time we started implementing some of the recommendations which have been advanced.

In this area I do not think that we are moving fast enough. The minister talks of straining the system and seems to sidestep the issue by suggesting, "Well, if we didn't have so much grain produced on the farms, it wouldn't pose the kinds of problems we have." I often wonder what has happened to his great theme "building for a billion." It seems to have gone by the wayside. In that connection we cannot overlook the fact that it was this minister who conceived the idea of operation LIFT which paid farmers not to grow wheat. When he uses this kind of rationale we get a little suspicious.

As my friend from Regina pointed out, the system as it now stands restricts our capability and therefore our potential in the international market, by some 21 million tonnes. I would like to quote again from the speech of Mr. Bjarnason:

A yearly volume of about 21 million tonnes thus seems to be the maximum quantity our present system is capable of moving into export. If we had had greater capacity in our system, we would not have had to defer 1.5 million tonnes of export grain to the 1978-79 marketing year.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Turner):** Order. I regret to inform the hon. member that his allotted time has expired. However, he may continue with the unanimous consent of the House. Is there unanimous consent?

**Some hon. Members:** Agreed.

**Mr. Mazankowski:** Mr. Speaker, under Standing Order 58(13) it says:

—and the member speaking immediately in reply thereto may speak for 30 minutes.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Turner):** I would suggest that the portion read by the hon. member applies to the member who introduces the motion and the member who speaks for the government side. All other members are allotted 20 minutes.

**Mr. Mazankowski:** In that case, Mr. Speaker, I will be as brief as possible. I would simply point out, as my hon. friend has pointed out, that the current capacity of our facilities restricts our capability of moving more than 21 million tonnes of grain to the export position at the present time. If one looks at the fact that we have problems with respect to co-ordinating our movements, one has to question whether or not we are receiving effective management in that particular area. One wonders why we cannot develop the kind of marketing strategies that would coincide with the low demands in our shipping season.