

that we must choose between the lesser of two evils. It seems to me that in this instance we prefer the evil over there, on the government side, to the evil that is over here.

Mr. Whelan: And you are the purest one involved in this debate!

Mr. Benjamin: But the hon. member who moved the motion did not include in it a clause providing that the nation as a whole would bear a share of the cost of grain storage. Instead he took the minister to task, quite rightly, for keeping country elevators and terminals half filled month after month in order to save the government money. But there was nothing in his motion about that.

The minister bragged today about hopper cars. Have I used up my time, Mr. Speaker? There is a great deal more I want to say, but I know I will not be given an extension. I close by supporting what the hon. member for Saskatoon-Biggar (Mr. Gleave) and the hon. member for Assiniboia said—that my party cannot be expected to support a motion that attacks the orderly marketing of grains coming under the jurisdiction of the Canadian Wheat Board.

Mr. Horner (Crowfoot): No.

Mr. Benjamin: The hon. member for Crowfoot (Mr. Horner) was out of the House when his colleague for Lisgar (Mr. Murta) said, "We need some changes. Farmers must have more freedom."

Mr. Murta: That was not an attack.

Mr. Benjamin: I suggest that was an attack on the principle of orderly marketing. Mr. Speaker, a motion that I consider to be an attack on the principle of orderly marketing of grains coming under the authority of the Wheat Board is not worthy of the support of the New Democratic Party. A motion that seeks to dissolve this House before we can grapple with important items now before us concerning veterans and farmers is not worthy of support. Therefore, I cannot support the motion.

● (2100)

Mr. Frank Hamilton (Swift Current-Maple Creek): Mr. Speaker, since coming to this House I have listened to a lot of balderdash but what I heard this afternoon and this evening from the Liberals and the New Democratic Party has to take the cake. I wonder how many permit book holders there are in the Liberal Party and the New Democratic Party. How many people in those parties even have their names in permit books? I have never heard such nonsense.

The hon. member for Regina-Lake Centre (Mr. Benjamin) wants to know why we cannot adjust a long-term contract. I suggest to him that maybe we can write in an escalation clause if the world price varies by 10 per cent. He also wondered what changes this party envisages in the Canadian Wheat Board. The changes envisaged by this party are set out in the resolution, namely, to get the minister off the back of the Wheat Board and allow it to do what it knows best.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Wheat Sales

Mr. Hamilton (Swift Current-Maple Creek): If the hon. member is concerned about defeating the government tonight, I suggest that is the fastest way to get 30 cents a bushel for the farmers. It was the last election that got them the 30 cent increase in their initial payment.

The hon. member for St. Boniface (Mr. Guay) talked about the bright and buoyant days of 1973 being no accident for the western farmer. If he can take credit for disasters, shortages, hunger and malnutrition around the world, of course it is no accident. I have said before in this House that the buoyant conditions are due to politics of hunger, not politics of the present government.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hamilton (Swift Current-Maple Creek): I was fascinated listening to the minister who never makes a mistake. He said the farmers have never had it so good. The hon. member for Saskatoon-Biggar (Mr. Gleave) and the hon. member for Assiniboia (Mr. Knight) talked about this party launching an attack on the Canadian Wheat Board. What a lot of boloney. This is in no way an attack on the Wheat Board. This is a resolution to protect the Wheat Board from the interference of the minister and the grains group. Farmers are confused and afraid of this ministerial interference of the Canadian Wheat Board.

One member stated today that he has received no request from farmers for increases in prices, and so on. Because of the confusion and fear of western farmers I have received over 2,000 letters asking that the Auditor General report on the operations of the Canadian Wheat Board. Farmers are afraid of this political interference. I will not repeat what was said by the hon. member for Crowfoot (Mr. Horner) and the hon. member for Lisgar (Mr. Murta). I think they proved their case of ministerial interference. The Canadian Wheat Board needs a full-time minister.

Let us take a look at the physical plant that is involved. There are over 5,000 country elevators, 1,900 delivery points, 280 million bushels of terminal elevator space, 400 million bushels of country elevator space, 20,000 boxcars normally used for the delivery of grain, over 19,000 miles of railway lines, over 80 Great Lakes carriers, and 180,000 producers. The treatment they have received over the past number of years has been shabby.

For the past few years the Canadian Wheat Board has been wondering whether it was set up as a selling mechanism or a pricing mechanism. The resolution before us today is to clear up some of this confusion and doubt. The Agricultural Economic Research Council has proved that for every bushel of wheat produced and exported, the take of the federal government is \$1 or more. Up until the last election the farmers were receiving \$1.25 a bushel. The federal government's take was about the same. Is it any wonder that after five consecutive years of deliveries dropping each year, the farmers have ended up with a four-bushel quota worth \$1.25 a bushel—\$6 an acre gross return on land for which they pay \$100 an acre?

The minister in charge of the Canadian Wheat Board set up the grains group. These were the people who thought up Operation Lift and finally gave us the four-bushel quota. It was because of the uproar and howls of western farmers after the Lift program that the hatchet-man in