

Government Orders

on in international markets to deliver what it says it is going to deliver.

This has been the pattern of the government. It has very carefully selected vulnerable targets. It has used the elderly. It has used the unemployed. It has used seniors. It has used aboriginal Canadians. It has selected those people in society who have the least power to defend themselves and has systematically sought to turn the anger of the Canadian public away from the government, against its own fellow citizens.

A government that should be building a nation, that should be solving problems instead of creating them, that should be building co-operation and collaboration for the many challenges we face for the future instead has chosen to pit one Canadian against the other, to persuade Canadians that their prosperity depends on somebody else suffering. That is a cruel, destructive, vicious approach to trying to protect its own political popularity, and fortunately the polls are saying to everybody that it is not working.

I want to address some specific points the minister made. The minister talked about nurses being prevented from entering hospitals. I want to remind the minister of approximately a year and a half ago when again this government forced the lowest paid of its workers on to strike, the hospital services workers who serve those same veterans, who serve aboriginal communities and deliver health prevention programs. Those very same strikers, at their own expense, continued to provide essential services in those hospitals.

This gallery was full during that strike. While this government was forcing those people back to work because it had refused to negotiate a settlement with them, this gallery was full of nurses and dietitians from Ste. Anne de Bellevue, the same hospital the minister just mentioned. The nurses, the dietitians and the doctors who were filling these galleries in support of those workers know that without those people who are earning a miserly \$17,000 a year, they cannot do their professional jobs of looking after the sick, the elderly, and those who have suffered and are disabled because they have fought for this country. Those same workers who earn only \$17,000 a year, were never treated fairly by this government, but provided those services even while they were legally out on strike.

The government did exactly the same thing to the ships' crew workers. It failed to designate people who go out to sea at risk to their own lives to save others as essential workers, so we had a strike of the ships' crew workers in December 1989. Again the government did not heed the calls from this side of the House for four months to get back to the bargaining table and negotiate a settlement, and the strike happened. It disrupted transportation in the Great Lakes—seaway system at a cost of a million dollars a day. This government ignored every warning that that was exactly what would happen in December if it did not reach a solution before then.

What did the ships' crews workers do? Did they do what the government had planned for them to do: withdraw essential services? No, they did not. At their own cost of half a million dollars and at inconvenience they left their own families. They stayed in hotels to be available should any emergency arise and were able on a couple of occasions during that strike to put out to sea to save lives. In a crisis which this government had created they set aside their own right to be on strike and at their own expense made sure they kept doing their jobs. This government should do the same.

The minister has referred to the disruption in the grain trade right now. This is a very serious situation, and we are well aware of this serious situation. Back in February when the government decided not to negotiate with its employees, one thing it knew with absolute surety was that the grain elevators would be full of wheat in September. Did this government designate those grain workers as essential when it had the opportunity to do so? No, it did not. Did this government deliberately want to create a crisis in the transport of grain in this country and our shipments to the Soviet Union, and create a crisis in the destruction of a crop for our western farmers? That is the only explanation I can think of as to why it did not designate grain workers as essential workers.

• (1050)

This government thrives on creating crises. It has created a crisis in our economy. We are seeing jobs leaving the most prosperous parts of our country. They are jobs that are going and not coming back. It is creating a crisis in employment. One and a half million people, on this very day, are unemployed in this country. The total throughout this year of how many people have been unemployed is going to be many, many million. How