

• (2120)

I regret I did not approach my many friends on the Liberal side and offer this amendment to them, because I know the government might then have been more receptive to the idea. Surely in this hour of crisis the Minister of Labour and the Prime Minister, who saw fit to fly out government planes east and west to bring us all back to Ottawa, would agree to put partisan politics aside and accept the logic of my proposal. If they do not like the date February 28, let them agree to January 31, or March 1. Let them choose any other date. But surely they should rise and say: "January 31 is time enough; if solutions are not reached by January 31, if we are returned to this House we shall take further strong arm action".

Mr. Mahoney: Strong arm action?

Mr. Horner: Strong arm action, as the hon. member for Calgary South suggests. I really do not believe they want to take strong arm action. I do not want to take strong arm action.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Horner: I believe we can reach a viable solution to this problem. Grain has to move. Imports have to enter Canada, not only through Vancouver but through every port on the west coast. I feel that because the government is faced with a situation in which it feels bound to call an election, the particular dates involved here are dates which will become subject to the challenge or call of political partisanship, and that is not a good thing. I urge all members of this House to sit down—

An hon. Member: Sit down yourself.

Mr. Horner:—and to think carefully. If anyone has any objection to the date I suggest, February 28, 1973, he should tell me what his objections are. If the matter is settled before December 31, 1972, there is no problem. If it is settled three days after January 1, there will be no problem. Why not give the system a little more time before a new government may have to act, or before a coalition government has to use its weapons?

Having made my plea for some kind of non-partisan solution to the crisis which is presently preventing the movement of grain as well as the movement of goods in and out of Canada, I urge the committee to accept the amendment moved by myself and seconded by my hon. friend from Red Deer. The solution I propose is a simple one. It is one which will cause the least difficulty to the next government, and perhaps it will result in grain and other commodities moving quickly again. I commend to the House this amendment changing the date in line seven on page four from December 31, 1972 to February 28, 1973.

Mr. Broadbent: Mr. Chairman, the hon. member for Crowfoot has proved conclusively by his speech in support of the amendment that either the Conservative party knows nothing about labour relations or that he is willfully accepting a system which would place both management and labour under the control of government for a

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much longer period than the bill presently before us is suggesting.

He says he wishes to give those involved time in which to work out their difficulties. He says the period presently proposed fails to do this. The logic of the argument would lead one to the conclusion that he should propose cutting the period from four months to two months if he wants something known as free collective bargaining. My friends on the right are always talking about the merits of free collective bargaining. But instead of proposing an amendment which would result in management and labour being uninhibited by government control, the hon. member for Crowfoot proposes that there be an additional two months during which both parties are bound by the existing contract. Rarely has one heard such an absurd proposal presented in this chamber. We have listened to a good many but this one comes near to the top of the list.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Broadbent: The legislation before us is not such that it can be approached enthusiastically as, to his credit, the Minister of Labour has pointed out. But politics often offers a choice, not between black and white but between two objectives, each of which is desirable; in this case, the preservation of collective bargaining on one hand and the maintenance of wheat exports from Canada on the other.

We in this party agree that it is necessary severely to inhibit the process of free collective bargaining for a four-month period by passing this legislation. Nevertheless we cannot accept the ridiculous suggestion which has just been made that he extend the process for another two months. This would not encourage the people concerned to work together to reach an agreement. Rather, it would postpone the period of free discussion for a further two months. I urge utter and complete rejection of this proposal.

Mr. Horner: I believe, Mr. Chairman, that if I speak now I close the debate. The hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre assures me that this is the case.

I should like to correct a misinterpretation which has been placed upon my words. If a settlement through collective bargaining is reached by December 29, 1972, the unions and the other parties involved will no longer be affected by this legislation and there will no longer be any problem. My amendment merely allows for extra time in which to enable the legislation to take effect.

• (2130)

If the hon. member of the New Democratic Party believes that today is a day on which the members of his party should feel a bit chesty and that they should throw their weight around in the House of Commons, I forgive him for his words. But when he misconstrues the words I used and the amendment I moved, I cannot let this go unchallenged.

I want to reemphasize that if an agreement were reached at any time prior to February 28, 1973 this legislation would automatically go by the board. The grain would be moving and commodities would be moving in and out of Canada. It would not in any way superimpose the long arm of the government upon the unions, nor for