

Supply

their 3.5 test milk when the cost of production was \$4.35 and even \$4.65. I think that our farmers cannot go back, nor are they considering going back in the next election to those long years of darkness the hon. member for Qu'Appelle-Moose Mountain is trying to praise. I think that those years are over. The minister is looking at me and I think he approves of what I have just said. Those years are over and thank God we now have a minister who I think is clever and looks after his business.

[English]

Mr. Horner (Crowfoot): Mr. Chairman, before the debate on schedule A, production and marketing program, concludes I thought I might say a few words about it. The new Minister of Agriculture has not really given us his views on what in western Canada is commonly known as the Liberal libel on agriculture, the task force report on agriculture. The former minister of agriculture stated during the last election campaign that the one big error he made was he had not publicly declared that he did not support the task force report on agriculture. I am wondering just what the present minister thinks about it. Certainly we are wondering about it since it contains many myths and untruths in regard to the goals and objects of Canadian agriculture.

The minister in charge of the Canadian Wheat Board, the hon. member for Saskatoon-Humboldt, has been making a number of remarks in the House of late which suggest that some members of the Conservative party are not in favour of the Canadian Wheat Board. This reminds me of a statement made by the hon. member from Saskatchewan to the effect that I was opposed to the Canadian Wheat Board. I should like to assure the minister, through you, Mr. Chairman, that I am in no way opposed to the Canadian Wheat Board. I believe that board's powers should be strengthened and I would develop policies to do just that if I had the opportunity.

• (1620)

I am not in favour of the manner in which the minister is handling the Canadian grain situation. In western Canada during the last campaign there were attempts made by the Liberal party to suggest that the minister in charge of the Canadian Wheat Board is the greatest Canadian salesman of wheat Canada has ever had.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Horner (Crowfoot): I hear some hon. members saying "Hear, hear". They should look at the annual report for 1970-71 and the percentage of the wheat trade Canada has had in the last number of years. We never dropped below 20 per cent in the whole history of the Wheat Board; but when that minister took charge of the Canadian Wheat Board we dropped to 17.4 per cent of the world's wheat trade. The next year it was 18.5 per cent, the next year 18.5 per cent, and in 1970-71 he got it up to 21 per cent. It will be higher this year because of the drought in Russia and China.

The previous speaker talked about the price of wheat back in 1961. He was quite right. In 1961, as indicated at page 18 of the annual report, the total realized price was \$1.91 per bushel. When the present minister took over it

[Mr. Beaudoin.]

went down to \$1.81 and it has dropped ever since. The next year it was down to \$1.70, the next year to \$1.68, the next year to \$1.67 and the announced price today is \$1.59. One can see the steady slide downward. Our percentage of world wheat trade has gone down and our price has gone down, yet the Liberal party believes it has the greatest wheat salesman Canada has ever had. Certainly he has lost us money every year he has been in charge.

We hear about the way barley is selling today. It certainly is selling well and we wish we had more to sell. About two years ago the minister in charge of the Wheat Board sold barley on the international market for as low as 47 cents a bushel. The price at Vancouver today is \$1.69 a bushel. We wish we had a little more, but there is no surplus of barley. I met the vice-president of the Saskatchewan wheat pool at the Federation of Agriculture conference and he asked me if I thought Alberta would have enough barley to see us through until the next crop year. I said I thought we had. Then he asked me if I wanted to make a little bet, suggesting that we would not have enough. That indicates how much barley there is available.

The minister in charge of the Canadian Wheat Board has had the board conducting a survey. I spoke about this earlier. He does not want to release the results of that survey because it will show that the farmers' barley bins are almost empty. This minister has cost the Canadian wheat farmer, as I said in another speech, in the neighbourhood of \$600 million because of his foolish Lift program.

To my way of thinking, this minister has been Canada's worst minister in charge of the Canadian Wheat Board. His policies have been detrimental to the farmers of Saskatchewan in particular and I urge those farmers at the next election, whether it be in June or in the fall, to take steps to remove him. They can remove him from that portfolio, and they should because he does not understand the grain picture or the handling of grain. I would urge the Prime Minister to take the Canadian Wheat Board out of the minister's jurisdiction. Maybe he knows something about the law, but the Wheat Board should be given to someone with more understanding of the grain trade than the minister has. This minister thinks it does not really matter at what price he gives our product away as long as he moves it. The farmers are concerned about their product and the price at which it is sold. They are concerned about how it is handled.

During the last election campaign the minister came out to Calgary and said that if his party was re-elected the government would spend a considerable sum to really modernize the port of Vancouver. This port is very important to the marketing of grain in that it handles over 50 per cent of our export sales. What has been done to overhaul the port of Vancouver? Figures tabled in this House on March 5, 1972, indicate that in 1968 the federal government spent \$17 million on the port of Vancouver, but expenditures dropped to about \$6 million over the following four years. This indicates another sliding graph. The government should spend a little more on the port of Vancouver to help in the marketing of one of our major exports, grain from western Canada.