

Board — like the pools before it — sets initial prices for wheat, barley and oats each year. Once established those prices become minimums guaranteed by the Government of Canada.

The system worked well and has been strongly supported by the majority of producers. However, events in the late 1960's touched on above placed the Canadian wheat industry in jeopardy. Exports dropped. Carry-over stocks rose and international prices declined due in part to the failure of a new International Grains Arrangement negotiated in 1966 and 1967 when wheat was temporarily in somewhat short supply. Western farm income dropped drastically and everyone from the corner store owner to Massey Ferguson and General Motors became painfully aware of it, not least the Canadian Government.

Reflecting the immense importance of this crop to the Canadian economy, the whole industry has been exposed during the past two years or so to the most thorough examination ever given any Canadian industry.

A Canada Grains Council was established in Winnipeg with representatives from all sectors of the industry except government to examine ways of strengthening every aspect of the industry.

The Federal Cabinet Minister responsible for the Canadian

A few excerpts on the nature of the prairie, from *The Color of Canada, by the Canadian novelist Hugh MacLennan.**

Not so long ago — perhaps no longer ago than 15,000 years — the eastern Canadian prairie lay under the waters of Lake Agassiz, which rapidly drained off into the Hudson Bay as the Ice Cap receded. When the lake still covered the land, it drained off through the Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence. Lake of the Woods, the Red River and the prairie lakes — Winnipeg, Winnipegosis, Manitoba — are its survivals. So is the black earth of Manitoba, enriched by thousands of years of dead and decayed marine life. So, for that matter, is the tableflat land itself, crushed by quadrillions of tons of ice.

A land — flat in Manitoba, rolling a little in Saskatchewan, and above it prairie skies. Often when you drive along a prairie road, running straight to the horizon, you have the illusion that something is the matter with your car — that it has become stationary. When you fly across it after dark it seems to be dotted with fireflies — lights

Wheat Board, Mr. Otto Lang, also was told to devote all his time to the grain situation and make recommendations for major policy improvements, and he appointed a Grains Group, comprising experts in production, delivery quotas, transportation and marketing.

The Canadian Wheat Board itself hired outside consultants including experts from the U.S., a major competitor, and the Netherlands, a major importer, to examine critically its own operations.

As a result of these and other activities, dramatic changes have occurred and are scheduled which, although not always apparent to the casual observer, have had and will have a profound effect on the Canadian industry.

A completely modern computer-based "block" system of controlling grain movements is being established.

A drastic policy — LIFT (Lower Inventory for Tomorrow) — was carried out in 1970 which reduced wheat production by more than fifty percent and helped reduce the carry-over which had reached stifling proportions.

The Canada Grain Act has been completely revised. The number of grades of wheat has been reduced, and in response to the demands of modern millings, provision has been made for protein separation within grades. However, there will be no sacrifice of the characteris-



from barns and the windows of farmhouses, with occasionally a blaze of light that is a city or town. This is a land that can best be described in music, but

the music to describe it has yet to be written.

Who Has Seen The Wind — the verb is the decisive word in the title of W. O. Mitchell's wonderful novel of a boy growing up on the prairie, discovering life, love, cruelty, fear, and God in the movement of grain, in the sound of the wind, in the prairie birds and animals. A land which might have produced Hebraic prophets looking up to that appalling sky and asking the Creator, "What is man, that thou art mindful of him" and more than once coming to the conclusion that He is not. Mitchell's phrase that here life is reduced to "the common denominator of sky and Saskatchewan prairie" serves better than reams of analysis to explain the feeling of prairie people that their life is unique, that the people in the East and on the Pacific Coast can never really understand them. It explains the almost perpetual political opposition of the prairie provinces to whatever is the ruling party in the Central Canadian government.

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