

*Supply*

What I do not understand is that they can be critical of us and tell us we can do better, but put it in some perspective. Things are not as bad as they make them out to be. Second, if they are that bad, then tell us what you would do differently. All we hear is: "Spend. Spend more money. Get us out of the problem by spending money." Well, if in fact that was going to solve our problem, one would think that with the mountain of debt that we are carrying in the country, accumulated over a period of years, that that would have solved our problem.

Big debt, I think we have come to learn rather graphically and dramatically, is not self-liquidating. It turns out to be, as we find, self-perpetuating. If we let it go and do not deal with it, I would suggest that it can be self-liquidating. It can cause all kinds of problems for us. So, within that back-drop, we have begun to bring some sense about it as far as government spending is concerned and we have begun to reduce gradually the over-all deficit which, I think, is what most people want us to do, and with that we are going to see some results.

Think about that. We have begun to reduce government spending. At the same time, the government has supported the average family farm on the Prairies to the tune of something like \$30,000 each over the last five years. We have done that. So, to suggest and condemn us out of hand, without putting some of those things in place so that we can have a reference point for which to criticize us, does not make a lot of sense. To talk specifically about my responsibility with Western Diversification, I do not think that the opposition understands what Western Diversification is.

Let me give you a quote from the hon. member for Winnipeg—South Centre who elected to this place in 1979, at the same time I was. Here is what he said after the budget of the Minister of Finance last February, as reported by a Winnipeg newspaper:

The Western Diversification Initiative is "being gutted" by shifting from grants to loans, the Winnipeg—South Centre MP said.

This is absolutely incredible. This member has been in this House for 11 years. He has been here since the inception of WD, and he says the outfit is being gutted because we are no longer going to do grants. Eighty per cent of what we have done from day one has been loans. We do very few grants. Surely to goodness we can expect better than that from the opposition members. It is bad enough that they criticize us and do not want to use the whole story, but to come out and make an obvious error

like that tells me a lot about some of the homework they do. We do not do grants as a rule of thumb. We never have. Surely, we can expect them to do a little bit of homework when they want to be critical of us. I have given up on expecting them to give us any suggestions as to alternatives.

Let me tell you what we do. This is first time ever that we have had a deputy minister of a full department of the federal government located in western Canada. Have you ever talked about that? Four assistant deputy ministers are located in western Canada because we believe, if you are going to deliver regional development programs, the best place to administer them is in the area we are trying to help and it is easier for people to come to see us.

**An hon. member:** Right on. Get them out of Ottawa.

**An hon. member:** In the regions, for the regions.

**Mr. Mayer:** A full deputy minister of a full department of the federal government is located in Edmonton. There are four assistant deputy ministers, one in Winnipeg, one in Saskatoon, one in Edmonton and one in Vancouver. Did anybody ever talk about that? We also have an assistant deputy minister of Agriculture for the first time located in western Canada.

In the grain and oilseeds business, Winnipeg used to be the centre for North America. One can now make the case that, if there is a centre in Canada, it is in Winnipeg. It makes a lot of sense to have the grain and oilseeds policy branch of the Department of Agriculture located in Winnipeg. That is what we have done. Has anybody ever talked about that? No, no.

We do loans. We do small loans and big loans. We are very flexible. We try to restructure the payment schedule around the individual business. If we make a loan and there is going to be increased returns as a result of the loan, immediately we will structure it so that repayment starts quickly. If it is going to take a little longer, then we will wait one, two or three years, in some cases, before we want repayment. We try to structure it on the basis of the individual company.

Let me say a little bit about trade. Everybody talks about the free trade agreement and how terrible it is. Think about this: 50 per cent of the west's exports go to the United States. In Alberta, it is something like 70 per cent. It makes sense to have some trade rules with the