

money is coming from when fuel is crossing the border at 78 cents a gallon. It is coming right out of the co-operative refineries at Regina and as many as 15 truckloads a day are crossing the border.

I would like to have the record set straight as to how farmers and the rest of the people of Canada are being dealt with by the Government. We have had Liberal promise after Liberal promise. In the area of agriculture the Liberal Government has given us this kind of promise again and again. I fought in two elections in the Assiniboia riding. Long before I got actively involved in running for office the Liberals promised that they were going to remove the capital gains tax. They do a little here and a little there but it never comes about for farmers.

There was a clear indication by the Government that there was to be \$16 billion spent on the development and upgrading of transportation. What are we getting? In my riding we just received a letter saying that another rail line will be abandoned from Big Beaver to Coronach. We hear reports that people working on the railroads are being laid off. The amount of money which was to be spent from 1976 to 1992 has been cut back by the Government from \$16 billion to \$12 billion. The Government continues to promise the people that it is going to double-track and rebuild.

You will hear all kinds of these promises in the next few months, Mr. Speaker. They will be making promises about the capital gains tax. I ask the people of Canada and the Members of the House to reconsider and to think about the 18-cent tax on fuel when they hear some of the promises that will be made. It is clear that promises which deal with agriculture or farmers are never meant to be kept. All one has to do is look at the slate of leadership candidates and the direction they have taken. How can a leader of the country fight for the best interests of farmers when his directives come from a different area and a different perspective?

I do not want to take a great deal more time, Mr. Speaker, because there are other western Members who would like very much to speak on this Bill to amend the Western Grain Stabilization Act. However, one most important area is left out of this Bill. We agree with this Bill and certainly want quick passage of it. We are happy that the farmers will get some money, even if it is at the expense of playing politics. However, the area which is left out is the level of payment. For months we have been asking for a retroactive payment to be made to farmers. That would increase the level of payment.

Yesterday I had farmers from Alberta and Saskatchewan in my office. They told me that they are going through bankruptcies. They told me that they are facing the most severe financial cash flow problems that have been faced in the Prairies in their lifetimes. It is reminiscent of the 1930s when farmers lost their farms through bankruptcies. They lost their farms because they could not meet their financial obligations. A program was put in place to address this problem and we failed to use it when it was needed most. That is serious neglect on the part of the Government. The level of payment

should be increased significantly. The money is there and the Government has been using it.

If the Government makes a pay-out on the basis it says it will, it will be returning only a portion of what the farmers have paid in. That will include no major government contribution whatsoever. There should be a government contribution to that fund at this time. The Minister of Agriculture stands in his place and says that it is \$2 for \$1. That is another Liberal promise. The farmers' money is barely being returned. On paper it indicates that the Government should pay \$2 for every \$1 contributed by the farmers. That is not so, Mr. Speaker. That is not happening.

In concluding my remarks, Mr. Speaker, I ask what the alternative is to this kind of handling of a program which could have been a good program if the Government had put the priority where it should be. Quite clearly, Mr. Speaker, there is only one alternative. We have a tired Government on our hands. Someone indicated to me that giving the Liberal Party a new leader is not the solution. He said that you can paint and repaint an old car, but unless you change the motor and the transmission and clean up the situation, nothing is going to change. I am suggesting that in the best interests of agriculture, those concerned about grain and farmers across the country, the country needs a Progressive Conservative Government with representation in agriculture and a leader who is sensitive to the needs of the farmers and the economic development of the country. Then you will see a Canada that will be built with the help of the farmers in the best interests of all Canadians.

Mr. Stan J. Hovdebo (Prince Albert): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be able to speak on the western grain stabilization Bill today. I am pleased also that the Minister, who is absent at the moment, did suggest an amendment which may make it possible to have an immediate pay-out under the western stabilization plan.

● (1320)

However, I want to deal with the purpose of the Western Grain Stabilization Act, what it does and does not do. I would like to begin by comparing the rigidity of the Western Grain Stabilization Act to the much more flexible Agricultural Stabilization Act. I can do this by citing three examples of how the flexible Agricultural Stabilization Act has enabled farmer to receive help when they needed it much more quickly than provided for by the Western Grain Stabilization Act, which has not given a pay-out for the last five years.

On December 21, 1981 there was a payment under the Agricultural Stabilization Act of \$66.8 million for eight commodities. With respect to winter wheat in Ontario, which comes under the Agricultural Stabilization Act, a change was made to that Act within a few weeks because of the vomitoxin emergency. As a result of that vomitoxin situation, the payments were increased from the 90 per cent which the Act allows to 100 per cent in a very short time. We are unable to get a pay-out at all in the case of western stabilization plan, let alone a significant increase.