

### *Government Orders*

The one that jumped off the page when I looked at it was reducing input costs to producers. The government is increasing the input costs to producers. It is doing it through taxation on fuel and by its continued borrowing of money that has to be paid back through both interest charges and principal eventually; farmers have to play a role as they are generators of the GNP.

The red book went on to say that it would preserve policies and programs such as supply management. As soon as the Liberals were elected they were forced to change the nature of supply management as a result of the GATT agreement. Reformers knew this was coming. The whole world knew it was coming. The only people who seemed to think it was not coming were the Liberals. They campaigned they would preserve supply management in the state it was in before the GATT agreement. That was absolutely misinformation to give to the Canadian public. It is unfortunate they would perpetuate this type of propaganda in their election campaign.

They also said they would craft stabilization programs to minimize the impact of market price fluctuations; government support in developing new commercial markets for commodities in which the agri-food industry has a competitive advantage; sustainable agriculture practices to maintain and improve the quality of land and water; emission oriented research to increase productivity and create quality products to meet market demand.

They are very nice words but where is the beef? We have not seen anything yet from the minister of agriculture and there is certainly nothing in the implementation of the budget that would indicate that any of these promises in the red book are about to be fulfilled.

• (1135)

In the first throne speech agriculture was not even mentioned. It certainly does not seem to be a very high priority with the government.

Actions speak louder than words. Let us look at the record of the agriculture minister and the government since they came into power. As far as agriculture was concerned, 1994 was a year of indecision and inaction. It will be remembered by most as a year comprised of consultation and study groups that were not intended to be genuine but rather as a way of avoiding making tough decisions.

Issues that were pursued through legislation in the House were rather insignificant and inconsequential such as Bill C-49, the department of agriculture reorganization bill, Bill C-50, the Canadian Wheat Board research check-off act, Bill C-51, amendments to the Canada Grains Act, certainly not of any consequence to the industry.

Outside the House of Commons the minister of agriculture was heavily criticized over his handling of the durum wheat dispute with the Americans. After months of posturing the federal government caved into the American demands that Canada place self-imposed caps on shipments of wheat to the United States.

The minister also reneged on the promise he and the Prime Minister made during the election campaign. They made the promise they would hold a referendum on the future of the Canadian Wheat Board and barley marketing. They did not carry out that promise.

For 1995 the minister of agriculture is again making some promises and we will be watching to see whether he carries them out. He said in the *Western Producer* of January 5, 1995: "It is a year when we can really see the turning of a corner on a lot of issues. I think 1995 will be a very active and vigorous year in which a number of these issues will come to a head and be dealt with".

We are well into 1995 and to this point we have not seen very much positive by way of performance by the minister of agriculture. There certainly does not seem to be much in the budget to get excited about.

The minister of agriculture in 1994 delayed introducing legislation that would end the backtracking of grain from Thunder Bay to the west. It is a very costly and terrible practice which he had the power to correct. He said he would but then delayed the implementation of the act which would correct this problem and cost producers more money.

From the *Western Producer* on November 17, 1994 the minister said: "I cannot tell you what the amount of the Crow benefit will be. I have to tell you in all candour and honesty that I will expect the number to be somewhat lower and that is a product of the harsh fiscal reality we are living in at this time".

The minister was still giving farmers some indication the Crow benefit would be with us. When this budget came down, which we are implementing through Bill C-56, the Crow was gone. Why was the minister indicating payment would only be reduced when it would be eliminated? These were not the signals farmers needed to make decisions over the winter months as to how they would operate their farms in the current crop year.

Another very interesting issue important to agriculture producers goes far beyond the agricultural industry; it affects all exporters, transportation of our product to port.

I again quote the minister of agriculture from the *Western Producer*, March 10, 1994: "I do not want to jump to conclusions about what is needed". This was with regard to labour problems that plague the grain transportation system: "I do not want to jump to conclusions about what is needed but I merely observe that it is important that all the players work on a way to