

Wheat Sales

million was paid to prairie grain farmers as a result of the two-price system.

Hon. members opposite keep referring to Lift. Are their memories so short or are they so unfamiliar with western grain problems that they forget the desperate situation which we faced in the spring of 1970? We had mountains of grain choking the system. There was a glut of wheat around the world. Farmers began to go into barley and rapeseed, and this was to be encouraged since there were potential barley markets and rapeseed markets which were not being filled. Pressures had built up across the west that were reaching the exploding point. In that situation the government introduced Lift.

Members opposite continually forget the payments that were made to western grain producers at a time when money was desperately short. Bins were full. Elevators and terminals were bursting. The farmer was without cash and many of them faced bankruptcy, as was mentioned before. Payments under Lift to the tune of \$60 million represented a badly needed injection of cash into the prairie economy. Members opposite forget that many farmers received substantial Lift payments; hard cash which they so desperately needed. Members opposite conveniently forget, too, the diversification into barley and rapeseed which the Lift program encouraged. Production of barley and rapeseed has gone up substantially; it is being marketed readily, at good prices, and has become a major source of return to the western grain grower.

Let me talk about expanded credit facilities. In 1968 the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) said he would review and amend government credit facilities in order to improve the competitive position of Canadian grain on world markets. He kept that promise. The Canadian credit program was expanded to enable Canadian grain exporters to compete on an equal basis with our competitors. As a result of that undertaking and as a result of the Prime Minister's following through on it, in the 1970-71 crop year fully one-third of our export of wheat was made possible by the expanded credit program of this government. Sales of all grain on credit in that crop year totalled a record 154 million bushels.

I could go on with what has been done in the past three or four years in virtually revolutionizing the total grains industry. But western farmers—and this is something members of the Conservative Party have yet to learn—are far more interested in what is being done today and what will be done tomorrow than in what was done yesterday.

The hon. member for Saskatoon-Biggar (Mr. Gleave) suggested that I should say something about grain. I am attempting to do that now. Today we are preparing for a plebiscite among rapeseed growers to let them determine the marketing system that they want for marketing their product. In time to come, if western grain farmers want a similar plebiscite on flax and rapeseed I am sure we will look favourably at such a request.

We are determined to face up to and come to grips with one of the most serious problems that has plagued farmers for decades. I refer to the chronic cycle of boom and bust. One of the most urgent and major worries facing farmers every year is whether next year will bring disaster or success. Every farmer on the Prairies knows that inevitably he will have two, three or more years of success, high

[Mr. Guay (St. Boniface).]

prices and good delivery opportunities, followed by three or four years of poor delivery opportunities, low prices and general economic malaise. This chronic problem which has torn our farmers for generation after generation has to be solved and will be solved by this government. Western farm families must be provided with insurance against these massive shifts from poor to good and from good to poor. And this government—I repeat, this government—is dedicated to bringing that about.

The minister in charge of the Canadian Wheat Board was appointed in 1969. In that year cash receipts for the six principal grains totaled \$312 million. By 1972 cash receipts had gone up to \$504 million and will rise to approximately \$1,400 million in the next calendar year. Western Canadian grain farmers are today looking at their best year in history. We can handle more grain than ever; we will sell more than ever before; we will get higher prices than ever before. No wonder, then, the minister in charge of the Canadian Wheat Board was selected in 1971 as Saskatchewan's salesman of the year, joining such distinguished past award winners as the late premier, Ross Thatcher, Charlie Gibbins, former president of the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool, and others. No wonder, too, that on March 16 this year Saskatchewan's Luther College presented to the minister an outstanding achievement award. I quote from the award:

● (1740)

In recognition of his personal achievements, distinguished contributions to the public life and meritorious service to the province and the nation.

That award has been given to only two other persons, Saskatchewan's premier of 20 years, the hon. member for Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands (Mr. Douglas), and a former Prime Minister of Canada, the right hon. member for Prince Albert (Mr. Diefenbaker).

Western grain farmers, irrespective of their political inclinations, know the minister in charge of the Canadian Wheat Board has worked unceasingly and effectively on their behalf, has done and is doing an outstanding job. They know that he will continue to do so. They will not be deceived by the sordid attack launched today by the Conservative Party on this great western Canadian. Rather, they will be angered by this politically motivated attack on an outstanding western Canadian and on an outstanding four-year record in the grains industry which will continue for many years to come.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Bill Knight (Assiniboia): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the hon. member for St. Boniface (Mr. Guay); he read his speech exactly as the Minister of Justice (Mr. Lang) wrote it for him. I have not seen so many bouquets passed out for a long time. If the situation is so rosy, in terms of the view of western farmers toward the minister in charge of the Wheat Board, the hon. member for St. Boniface ought to take another look at the results of last October's election.

I wish to express considerable concern about the motion before us today. I will be as blunt as I can with the mover of the motion and the party he represents. To attack the Canadian Wheat Board as has been done today by the