

capitalize on the reservoir of goodwill, talent and character of the Canadian people. And so Canadians supported us because we committed ourselves to putting the economic house in order; to attacking the economic problems on two fronts; and to bringing fiscal responsibility back into the realm of good management. We committed ourselves to creating a climate of confidence for both the consumer and business, a climate of investor confidence and a climate of growth where ingenuity, initiative, creativity and the entrepreneurial spirit of Canadians can once again be unleashed. We committed ourselves to tackle the unemployment problem, not simply by creating more government programs but by encouraging the private sector to create those permanent jobs. We committed ourselves to addressing the interest rate problem.

• (1530)

We talked during the course of the election campaign of the four pillars; the need to address the interest rate problem; the need to address the training and re-training problem; the need for new technology; and the concentration on research and development and on trade, because this country as a nation must trade to survive. Thirty-five per cent of our Gross National Product is dependent upon international trade. We talked about scaling down the scope and size of government. We talked about building upon our natural strengths and revitalizing those basic industries which have carried us through good times and bad.

What are those basic industries? One is agriculture. This country has the potential of being a superpower in agriculture. Even today agriculture is a \$19 billion annual megaproject. When we consider that 40 per cent of our economic activity is related to the agri-food business, 18 per cent of our labour force, that we generate \$5 billion worth of exports, and yet individual farmers are hurting, we see that we must do something to help that particular sector. We are doing that by addressing the cost-input side.

The energy sector is another tremendous engine of economic growth and activity. The CPA has indicated that there are at least 300,000 new jobs which could be created by revitalizing the energy sector. There is the potential of 100,000 jobs in the petro-chemical industry alone through to the year 1990.

There is also the importance of the forest industry. It is a \$27 billion annual industry which has \$11 billion worth of exports. We must concentrate and ensure that that is a viable and vibrant industry. The fisheries industry is another one of our natural strengths, \$3 billion worth. Mining has \$12.2 billion worth of economic activity. Tourism is worth \$17 billion. We must, therefore, provide a better deal and framework for these industries in order that they may continue to grow and to generate the kind of new wealth which we need in this country.

Yes, Canadians voted for those kinds of programs and they voted for new ideas and new solutions. They also voted for a new way of governing through the process of consultation, co-operation and working together; renewing our political and economic partnership; and working through consultation and

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co-operation rather than confrontation and alienation. Yet today we hear the same misleading rubbish from my friends in the New Democratic Party which we heard throughout the election campaign.

I heard the Hon. Member for Yorkton-Melville (Mr. Nystrom) who said the other day that our Government has done nothing for agriculture. Let me go through a litany of things which have been done since this Government assumed office. On October 1, the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Wise), together with his provincial counterparts, announced a \$60 million federal-provincial drought assistance program for western Canadian farmers. On November 5, the Minister of Agriculture announced a suspension of farm foreclosures by the Farm Credit Corporation until January 15. It is a very distressing situation, and this decision gives us time to analyse the situation to see what we can do in a very constructive and meaningful way. On November 2, the Minister of State for the Canadian Wheat Board (Mr. Mayer), announced a \$123 million payment under the Western Grain Stabilization Act. This is something for which this Party has long campaigned. Over a year, \$123 million, for a total of \$223 million, has been paid out.

Initial prices for barley have been raised from \$2.39 to \$2.72. On October 26, I announced the freezing of the seaway tolls, which were scheduled for an 8 per cent to 10 per cent increase. This will be a saving of some \$2 million for the farmers of western Canada. In the economic statement there was the removal of the 9 per cent sales tax, the discontinuance of the collection of the federal excise tax of \$1.5 cents a litre—the 9 per cent sales tax is three cents a litre—and relief from the increase in the petroleum compensation charge. All this amounts to a total reduction of 6.3 cents a litre for farmers, fishermen and people engaged in the forestry industry. That is almost 28 cents a gallon, Mr. Speaker, and these guys across the way say we have done nothing for the farmer. Well, if we have done nothing for the farmer, let us take it away, and then we will hear the yelping and screaming coming from over there, because those Hon. Members do not know what they are talking about.

Furthermore, with respect to capital gains—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Charest): Order.

Mr. Mazankowski: —and things of that nature, those are items which are going to be referred to and dealt with.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Charest): Order. Are there questions or comments?

Mr. Benjamin: Mr. Speaker, while avoiding rhetoric, I would like to ask the Minister if he will finally get around to talking about his own Department, which got hit for \$288 million in cut-backs, which is additional to \$32.5 million which farmers are going to have to pay in user fees. I remind the Minister of how he spoke against the Honourable Otto Lang's user pay program. He was one of the leading spokesmen against it.