

at an acceptable level. Prices for agricultural products have gone up very little in the past 20 years. In the case of grain, some prices are lower now than they were in 1949. The industry has survived because of a phenomenal increase in efficiency, unmatched by any other segment of our economy. However, we cannot count on that rate of efficiency improvement being sustained; further steps must be taken to ensure that agriculture remains viable and progressive. The very commendable action taken recently in this regard is certainly appreciated, and we look forward to favourable developments this session.

Although the new Canada Grain Act was not enacted into law earlier this week, as many of us had hoped, I trust that arrangements can be made to move it forward into this new session without losing much of the progress already made. One of the main features in that legislation is the provision which would authorize the use of protein content as an important new factor in our wheat grading system. This change is imperative so that our wheat can be fully competitive in all our grain export markets, many of which require certain standards and uniformity in protein content.

The Farm Products Marketing Agencies Act is also urgently needed by some segments of Canadian agriculture. The standing committee has not yet had sufficient time to deal fully with this bill and the many amendments that may be put forward by committee members.

I hope that all members will agree to transfer these two bills to this new session without loss of status, and that the government will do everything in its power to see that these two important pieces of legislation receive early consideration.

The government has demonstrated a sympathetic understanding of the serious problems besetting the prairie grains industry. Contributing to that understanding have been the frequent visits to Saskatchewan by many cabinet ministers. I wish to thank those who have come to our province and to the constituency of Assiniboia. We are especially grateful to the Prime Minister, who made a special effort some 15 months ago to visit farms in my area and to talk to representative farm operators and their families. I am sure that his contacts then have helped him appreciate the situation there and enabled him to support present and future plans in the field of farm policy. An invitation is hereby extended to all cabinet ministers to visit our part of the country. You will be made very welcome, whether or not it is your first visit. This invitation is always out to all parliamentarians and all residents of every province. If you come in the summer or the fall you will marvel at our open landscape, our large fields of growing or ripening grain, our ranching country and our tidy towns and cities. You will enjoy meeting the friendly people, too, I am sure.

● (2:30 p.m.)

We do have some other industries in Assiniboia constituency. There are two very productive sodium sulphate mines at Ormiston and Gladmar, and there are a considerable number of oil wells in various locations. There are some very important secondary industries in the city of

*The Address—Mr. A. B. Douglas*

Weyburn, as well as at some of the other progressive urban centres. Although some people have reservations about it, most are pleased to see construction under way on a distillery in Weyburn.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear.

**Mr. Douglas (Assiniboia):** This will provide employment for a significant number of people and a market for hundreds of thousands of bushels of grain each year, with prospects of expansion in the future.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear.

**Mr. Douglas (Assiniboia):** This particular industry was developed under the federal industrial incentive plan shortly after our part of Saskatchewan was designated as an eligible area. Saskatchewan is definitely an area of slow industrial growth, and I hope that all concerned will see to it that more industries will be established under this imaginative program in the future than there have been to date. Our economy is in great need of diversification and, comparatively speaking, Saskatchewan has received a very small share of the industrial incentive grants to date. I note with approval that this regional development incentive plan will be continued.

The Speech from the Throne indicated that action on tax reform will be taken in this session. People all over Canada have taken a great interest in this matter and have responded strongly to the invitation to comment on the white paper on the subject which was issued 11 months ago. This has been an exercise in democracy which is different from previous approaches by government to tax reform. As a result many people have been unable to understand or accept the government's stated intention of giving full consideration to points of view and suggestions for change which might be brought to their attention. I trust that when the legislation forecast in the Throne Speech is introduced, it will show that the government has taken into account the earnest and well documented proposals of many organizations and private citizens. In this regard, I take the liberty of quoting two sentences from the eighteenth report of the Standing Committee on Finance, Trade and Economic Affairs. Two of their principle conclusions as a result of their extensive study and hearings are, "That the tax load now borne by lower income Canadians be reduced", and "that preservation of an economic climate favourable to growth must be a central consideration of Canadian tax policy".

Both of these principles are important in western Canada, especially the one about growth. The development of the economy in the west is not nearly as far advanced as in central Canada, and we are particularly concerned about this matter. I commend those two principles to the government, as tax reform measures are being prepared for legislative action.

There has been mounting concern across our nation about the sorry state of labour-management relations. In the Prairies we are heavily dependent on the continuity of such services as grain handling and transportation. With these facilities being required to operate at full capacity in the foreseeable future, we are apprehensive about the possibility of strikes or lockouts. The indication