

Agriculture

and when it ought to be sold. In doing its job it was making sure of the state of the crop which was coming up before making new commitments to completely new buyers. Throughout that period it was looking after the needs of Canadians and our regular customers, needs with respect to which it has a special obligation.

The hon. member for Crowfoot made one of his wild statements in suggesting that the Wheat Board had refused to sell 70 million bushels of wheat to India. I said that this was not so, but that did not deter him. He built his story on that suggestion. He said that we could have sold those 70 million bushels at the then world price, which was a little better than \$3 per bushel. Hon. members who wish to look at what he said may consult *Hansard* for June 21, page 4981. He made the mistake of trying to look ahead too far, and he looks very foolish now for having done that. That is the kind of attitude that has been displayed by members of the opposition.

May I refer also to the remarks of the right hon. member for Prince Albert (Mr. Diefenbaker) who, with other hon. members, for about six months insisted on suggesting to farmers that a great deal of grain had been sold forward at very low prices and apparently convinced many farmers for a long time that there might be no final payment this year and that even next year's final payment may be low. Let me refer to the predictions of the Canadian Wheat Board with respect to the current year, which indicate a figure of about \$4.50 for wheat. The final payment for the next crop year will, according to current conditions, very likely be over \$1 for feed barley. This figure will come on top of the biggest initial prices that have ever been paid in our history for wheat, oats and barley. There will be some extremely high figures relating to final payments.

Nevertheless, hon. members opposite are trying to mislead the farmers of this country because they are seeking narrow political advantage and closing their eyes to the facts, which show that much has been done to make the agricultural industry viable, to make it an industry in which more farmers can survive because income levels are now approaching more closely reasonable figures than at any time in our history. It is the wish of this government to maintain those incomes.

Hon. members opposite, bewildered because so much has been done for the agricultural community, which includes the prairie region, even though the government party does not have a great political presence on the Prairies—

An hon. Member: It will have less in the future.

Mr. Lang:—suggested that somehow the Minister of Agriculture and the minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board have not managed to convince their cabinet colleagues of the need for acting in the area of agriculture. The situation is exactly to the contrary. Cabinet colleagues from other parts of the country have listened to my recommendations and those of the Minister of Agriculture when we have put before cabinet proposals for the improvement of the agricultural industry of this country. This is to their great credit, a credit that history will record.

The hon. member for Crowfoot said he was worried about transportation. It is true that we had a rail strike and a consequent delay in the movement of grain. How-

[Mr. Lang.]

ever, I am happy to tell hon. members that stocks at Vancouver and Thunder Bay are moving out notwithstanding the very heavy pressure put upon the railways for boxcars by other industries. This pressure is evidenced by the interest of hon. members from British Columbia with respect to rail cars for moving lumber, potash, fertilizer, and so on. Notwithstanding that pressure, the volumes moved are creeping up.

In his motion the hon. member suggests that we should not do things ad hoc, but then he had the temerity to suggest that there is some problem connected with transportation. He was not enthusiastic when we purchased the 2,000 hopper cars. That purchase was an important move and was a step in the right direction for our transportation system. Now he says, I think, that it was a good move. He ignores the fact that the block system has been developed and that our cars are placed in locations on a co-ordinated basis. The fact that co-ordinators are working at various terminals means that there is now a most co-ordinated movement of grain.

He says that he is against ad hoc measures, yet he ignores the fact that for two years we have developed studies on the whole transportation and handling system which are now available and in the hands of the industry as a whole, including the Canada Grains Council. They are being subjected to further examination with a view to our taking steps to improve the system and make this industry the great industry that it ought to be.

Of course our transportation system has been tested to the limit by our tremendous sales effort. This has resulted from a body of co-ordinated policies respecting market development and credit facilities, the like of which we have never seen nor even imagined before. It was through these credit facilities, through the guaranteed additional and new credit programs available to new and to old customers we had lost, that we got back to the position where for three years in a row we have exported and consumed more wheat than we have produced. Naturally we cut into the reserve that we had on hand before that time.

● (1720)

With over 800 million bushels exported in the past two years we set records that were never even dreamed of a couple of years ago. We tested our handling and transportation system and got it into a position where it could do more than believed previously. However, we will not rest until it has more capacity so that we can go on challenging our producers to produce to the limit of their capacity and not hold back and fail to fertilize as we had to do in years when we were not selling an average crop in an average year. That is what this is all about.

In this year I foresee the real probability that, even though we have produced the second largest number of bushels of grain ever produced in the prairie region, perhaps not quite at the 1,506 million bushel level of a few years ago, we will again export such a quantity of grain that at the end of this year we will have exported and consumed in Canada more than we have produced. We will continue to challenge our producers to use the best possible techniques and thereby bring their farming operations into the most economical possible state.