

to pursue constructive policies, in the knowledge that the main body of farm opinion was solidly behind us.

The grain marketing policies of the Canadian Government have enjoyed a remarkable degree of success in post-war years. Indeed, these policies and the determination with which they have been pursued have been the envy of most of our competitors on world wheat markets.

These policies have enabled Canada to sell good quantities of grain at satisfactory prices. They have built up good-will in overseas markets. They have established Canada as a reliable supplier of good quality grain. They have given the buyer confidence that Canada will not take advantage of temporary scarcities by exacting the highest prices that the market will bear. They have given the buyer confidence that, in conditions of temporary over-supply, Canada will not suddenly panic, and attempt to dump her holdings on to a reluctant market.

These policies have not always been accepted without question. I can recall and you will recall many times when the Wheat Board system of marketing and the way in which that system was being administered were under violent attack, as in fact they are today by voices that are familiar to us all. In the knowledge that an overwhelming majority of the producers themselves believed in the present system of marketing, the Government stood firm. I believe I speak for all present in this room when I say that the western producer is better off financially today and the Canadian economy is stronger because we have had the courage of our convictions.

Today the western producer, the Wheat Board and the Government are faced with greater difficulties in marketing grain than at any time since the end of the war. Why is this so? Is it because of Canadian marketing policies?

Those who have opposed and continue to oppose the present system of Wheat Board marketing can be expected to answer "yes" to this question. They will urge a return to the pre-war situation. If anyone here is tempted by this line of argument, I would suggest that he look up the pre-war record, and refresh his memory of what happened when marketing difficulties arose in those years. During a similar period of unsold surpluses in the early 1930's, wheat prices fell to the lowest levels ever recorded at Winnipeg, without any significant effect upon the volume of sales of Canadian wheat.

In my view, the present marketing difficulties are not to be traced to the present Wheat Board system. On the contrary, history will record, I believe, that had it not been for the existence of the Canadian Wheat Board, with firm control over supplies of western grain, the situation today would have been much worse; might indeed have been similar to the situation that existed in the early 1930's.

What then are the reasons for existing marketing difficulties? The first, and perhaps most important, is the fact that Western Canada has produced four very big crops in five years. This is by no means a misfortune, but it has inevitably led to serious congestion in elevators, and slow deliveries by producers. The world was simply not in a position to absorb in five years the record quantities of wheat produced by western Canadian farmers in that period. Some had to be carried over, both in elevators and on farms.