

*Wheat Acreage Reduction*

ing. A number of private members in our party took it upon themselves to make a case before the Board of Transport Commissioners, as it then was, and at the same time we persuaded the then Minister of Agriculture, Mr. Alvin Hamilton, to undertake a number of experimental surveys within his department. In the result, we were able to get the Railway Act amended in such a way that rapeseed was classed as a grain and could be carried to export positions at the same rates as wheat, oats and barley. The government assisted in promoting the sale of rapeseed until today its export occupies an important place in our national economy. This is an indication of what can be done by a government with enterprise, knowledge and a feeling for the best interests of the farmers and others in the agricultural community. The farmers want to know that there is a government in Ottawa which has their interest at heart and is prepared to take the steps essential to maintaining a viable agriculture economy in western Canada.

• (11:10 p.m.)

There are many other points. For example, it is about time the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion (Mr. Marchand) took a look at this situation. There is a strong case to be made, a case that we have attempted to make in this House, for trying to change the economic mix in western Canada by injecting into certain areas a reasonable measure of industrial development to form the basis for carrying forward the country's economy in conjunction with the agricultural economy. I think this is a very essential step, yet the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion has ignored our suggestions.

Then what about making some effort to try to secure employment opportunities for the people of western Canada? This, too, would be part of a wide program which, taken in conjunction with this measure, would probably prove acceptable and would indicate to the people of western Canada that the government of Canada was indeed cognizant of their troubles and prepared to do something about them.

If the government, and particularly the Minister of Agriculture, are prepared to look at these suggestions on this basis, I assure them they will have the strongest support from the members of this party. But standing by itself, this program is defective. It does not meet the situation, and having in mind the psychological attitude of the people in the

[Mr. Baldwin.]

west, in my opinion it will end up by aggravating and worsening the situation that now exists in western Canada.

[Translation]

**Mr. Marcel Roy (Laval):** Mr. Speaker, I will be brief. I am participating in this debate, perhaps more specifically related to the western provinces, as a member of Parliament and as a citizen of an eastern province of Canada which certainly represents a potential market for western wheat.

I am in favour of the \$100 million for western farmers. It is real evidence that the government is aware of its responsibilities and wishes to meet its commitments. I have before me a Chinese proverb which says:

If you plan for one year, sow grain. If you plan for 10 years, plant a tree. If you plan for 100 years, teach the people. By sowing grain once, you will reap once. By planting a tree, you will reap ten fold. But by teaching the people, you will reap a hundredfold.

We are now faced with a diversification in farming. I mentioned last week that agricultural productivity would increase annually at a rate of about 6.9 per cent during the next decade, compared with 3 per cent in the industry.

It is essential, and I think all members of the House will agree, that we give a new type of leadership to agriculture. We must study new markets, we must consider every alternative and seek the best possible solution.

All hon. members are very actively seeking solutions to the problem. First, I would like to define this problem taking into account the relative importance of agriculture in the economy of the country.

The western farmers produce 55 per cent of all agricultural commodities in Canada, of which more than 40 per cent are for export. However, in the eastern provinces production is lower than \$500 million on a total of \$2 billion, and only from 10 to 15 per cent of such production is for export.

However, problems are absolutely alike in the East and in the West, as in both there is surplus production. Only one department is concerned and the decision to subsidize western farmers to the extent of \$100 million seems to me altogether normal.

However, when I learned last Friday that the Minister without Portfolio responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board had announced compensation payments of some \$100 million to western farmers, I was virtually thunder-