

a mainly agricultural riding where grain production has been increasing over the past few years, and given the recent developments regarding GATT and NAFTA, I would like the minister to tell me what is to become of farm income stabilization, crop insurance, and the Crow rates as they apply to western grain transportation.

Will these benefits be considered as some form of subsidy? Will they be allowed under the terms of these agreements? There does not seem to be too much of a problem for the time being. However, should this type of insurance be regarded as subsidy and should farmers be deprived of such assistance, what are you planning to do for grain producers who are presently covered?

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu):** Order, please. Unfortunately the time allotted for questions and comments has expired. Will the House allow the minister a short answer?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

[English]

**Mr. Goodale:** I am pleased to have the opportunity to briefly respond to the question. I am sure we will have other opportunities to consider the questions raised by the hon. member in greater detail. The member certainly has touched upon some vital questions in terms of the future of Canadian agriculture.

I mentioned in my remarks that we would be reviewing the whole system of farm safety net programs and hopefully moving toward the concept of whole farm income safety nets for the future. They have a number of advantages from our domestic point of view. The whole farm income concept also has the great advantage of being largely production and market neutral. Therefore it is less likely to be subject to any violation of the new GATT. That is one of the reasons we are very interested in this concept of whole farm income safety nets. That would touch upon many of the support programs the hon. member has referred to, including crop insurance and so forth.

The area is under review. We have a conference coming up in February to begin the process of that review. Working with the provinces, the farmers and farm organizations, I think we can arrive perhaps at the end of 1994 at a much clearer understanding about how we need to adjust our programs to ensure they are doing the job properly for Canadian farmers.

• (1045)

The answer on the Western Grain Transportation Act would necessarily be long. I assure the hon. member it is a subject which is very likely to be affected at least in some way by the implications of the GATT. It is a subject matter that we will undoubtedly revisit in this House on many occasions as I consult, as I ought to do, before any changes are made.

**Mr. Stephen Harper (Calgary West):** Madam Speaker, this is my first opportunity to address the House at length. I am sure you are getting tired of hearing that but two-thirds of us are new

members. Many of us who have been here in the past are in new roles, as are you. I congratulate you on your appointment to that role.

At the beginning of these new roles or the beginning of our careers we have the opportunity to think longer term about the problems of our country than perhaps parliamentarians have done in the past.

Many people in my constituency have built successful careers, homes and families by thinking longer term in their affairs. Now they have taken a brave step this time in electing a new MP from a new political party to represent them for the next four or five years.

I want to take a moment to say I am greatly honoured by that election. It is an overwhelming honour and I plan to do my best to fulfil their expectations. We certainly know what happens when you forget who sent you here. The Prime Minister alluded to that yesterday. I hope that I and this Parliament do not let the people of Canada down, as I feel the last Parliament did.

In my particular case I was elected from an urban riding, a riding entirely within the city of Calgary that has 100,000 people. It is in the western suburbs of Calgary. We have a large military base. We have two post-secondary institutions.

In spite of that, my riding and our city reflect largely a private sector character. We do not have a federal or provincial government. We are one of the larger cities that does not.

Of course we have experienced the ups and downs that Alberta has had in the past decade largely through and because of our dependence on the oil industry. In spite of that there is a broadening of our industry in Calgary historically from agriculture to energy, now to services. This broadening reflects our entrepreneurial spirit in the west, in Alberta and in Calgary in particular.

This growth in the view of most Calgarians, I think I am safe to say, has been not so much with the help of government as in spite of it and in spite of the federal government in particular.

I was a newcomer to Alberta when a distant government imposed policies that brought an end to the boom times that brought me to Alberta to begin with. Of course I am referring to the national energy program. No Canadian can live through an experience like that without it influencing greatly his or her thinking about government and about our country. In spite of that thinking and in spite of the drain the federal government has often imposed on Albertans, Albertans have never wavered in their patriotism or in their optimism about the future.

Today the federal government presents not hopes but obstacles to economic recovery. The obstacles are most clearly represented by the national debt and the deficits adding to it which we are experiencing and have experienced in the past number of years. I am not going to recount the statistics. I am an economist and that would be economics and that is a dangerous