

The Address—Mr. Wilson (Swift Current-Maple Creek)

I would like to list a number of responses already made by the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Wise) and the Minister of State for the Canadian Wheat Board (Mr. Mayer). First, there is the final payment of \$123 million under the Western Grain Stabilization Plan, coupled with the important commitment to make pay-outs more flexible and time-responsive relative to the seasonal needs of the producer. It is the intention of the Government to attempt to initiate a substantial interim payment for 1984-85 in time to assist in the cost of spring seeding.

Second, in response to the drastic position of a significant percentage of the agricultural community, the Minister has imposed a freeze on Farm Credit Corporation foreclosure activity until January, 1985, pending a thorough review in an attempt to seek innovative ways to deal with the problem.

Third, there will be immediate capital gains relief, which will assist older farmers to retire in dignity and at the same time enable younger farmers to begin with less debt load.

Four, there will be improvements to farm rollover provisions, expanding the definition of child and enlarging the definition of land qualifying for the rollover, all of which will relieve substantial impediments to farm estate planning and intergenerational transfers.

● (1630)

Five, a number of agricultural taxation issues, including the question of part time, Section 31 of the Income Tax Act relating to farmers, the question of agri-bonds and the taxation of capital gains on farm land, will be referred to a parliamentary committee for expeditious study and report.

Six, there will be substantial fuel cost relief, as promised, in the form of a three-cent a litre sales tax rebate on farm fuels and an exemption from the 1.8 cent per litre increase in the petroleum compensation charge, giving a total benefit of almost 22 cents a gallon.

The foregoing are but some of the initiatives already put forward in the few short weeks of this Government. They represent a caring and practical response to some very real problems.

It is the hope of many of my constituents that an increase will be made in the domestic wheat price. At present, the return to the bread wheat producer is the equivalent of something less than two slices out of a standard loaf of bread. A 50 per cent increase in the domestic wheat price would cost the Canadian consumer approximately 5 cents per loaf. Surely, Canadians would find this a small price to pay to assist in the survival of Canadian agriculture.

Many constituents in Swift-Current-Maple Creek remain most resentful of metric and the arbitrary and high-handed way it has been imposed. Metric measurement has caused considerable hardship, unnecessary expense and occasional catastrophe to the agricultural community, particularly in the application of chemicals and fertilizer. They welcome the undertaking to allow Imperial measurement on these containers.

The oil and gas sector in my constituency and Saskatchewan in general has, through sensible provincial royalty provisions, experienced a real boom. It is hoped that a similar common sense federal approach will foster unprecedented oil and gas development. We applaud the recent natural gas export licence amendments enabling Canadian companies to export gas to the United States, thus benefiting the industry, producing provinces and Canada as a whole. This will earn more export revenue, which will in turn strengthen our dollar and lessen pressure on interest rates.

The problem of unemployment, particularly among the young, is grave. This is the bitter fruit of years of economic stagnation and of government mismanagement. It will not be easily overcome. A string of massive deficits and consequent high interest rates, coupled with retrograde policies which discourage risk taking, have caused unprecedented economic malaise. Short-term solutions will not work. We need a fundamental change of direction in this country, a change which is well documented in the Throne Speech and the economic statement, change which through consultation and consensus will restore fiscal responsibility, remove obstacles to growth and encourage new investment.

I will touch briefly on some of the pressing concerns of my constituents. Many of them have quite properly raised concerns over problems in the collection of child maintenance payments. I can think of no legitimate reason for a father to dodge payments for child support, thus throwing the burden on the rest of society. This problem of long standing is under examination and, in a new spirit of co-operation and dialogue with the provinces, I am optimistic that real progress will be made.

The people of Swift Current-Maple Creek express consternation over abuses in the parole system. Many also favour a return to capital punishment. I personally share these concerns and intend to work for both a thorough overhaul of the parole system and a return to the death penalty in situations of first degree murder.

I have received many queries regarding the situation in Ethiopia, and while Canada has already made a generous contribution, it is our intention, as expressed through the Right Hon. Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Clark), to mobilize a national campaign of relief. Information will be forthcoming from all Members of Parliament to groups in their constituencies as to how best assistance can be marshalled and funnelled into these grief-stricken areas.

Further, in the international arena, Mr. Speaker, peace must be our most cherished goal. No group, and certainly no political Party, has a monopoly on the desire for world peace and nuclear disarmament. We can collectively leave for our children no greater legacy than a world free of the nuclear threat. I congratulate the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) and the Secretary of State for External Affairs for their initiative in the appointment of Mr. Roche as the ambassador for disarmament.

At the same time, Canada, if it is to be taken seriously in the world, must act on its own as a sovereign nation and live