

The Address—Mr. Douglas

I think it will be necessary for governments to increase their rate of support for crop insurance so that these plans will be universally accepted. If that happens, farmers will be more adequately protected against the many hazards we face every year, and which have been especially prevalent this season. The benefits of such a widespread crop insurance program would be great indeed, and I am convinced that its sustaining and steady influence on the national economy, would far more than compensate for the cost. There are various proposals for bringing about these changes in the application of crop insurance, but I will not attempt to go into them at this time.

The Speech from the Throne referred to a national grains council. I believe this is a most welcome proposal. At the present time we have many different organizations purporting to speak for the farmers. For example, I am a member of the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool and also the Saskatchewan Farmers Union. Both these organizations make statements from time to time, and sometimes they disagree. I hope a national grains council will have representation from producers, farm organizations and all interests involved in the production, handling and marketing of our grain. Such a council should be able to arrive at solutions for the very serious problems facing farmers at this time, solutions that would find ready acceptance by the federal government because they would represent the combined thinking of all groups concerned.

I hope the national grains council, or the government, will examine the merits of what has come to be known as the two-price system for wheat. This system would raise the price of wheat used for domestic consumption by perhaps \$1 a bushel above the export price which is chronically depressed by world trading conditions. This domestic price increase would be financed, not by government subsidy, but by increasing the price of bread by approximately two cents a loaf. The price of bread has gone up a great deal in the past 20 years, but the value of its wheat content has changed very little. It seems to me it is only fair that farmers should receive an increase in respect of the basic ingredient of bakery products, when all others concerned in the business have received more for their efforts. The price of everything used by farmers in the production of grain has risen by leaps and bounds, and there should be some way to relate the price of wheat used in

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Canada to the general price levels of other goods and services. I am told that Canada is the only major wheat producing country which does not give its farmers the advantage of a better price for wheat used at home. I urge early action to investigate these proposals. I know there are difficulties involved, but I am sure they are not insurmountable.

I said earlier, Mr. Speaker, that I intended to bring the needs of my area to the attention of the house. I hope I have made a start on that project in the past few minutes. I want to say also that I am interested in the problems of every part of Canada, and I have listened with interest to the speeches of others participating in this debate. However, like many other members, I am dubious about the wisdom of using so much valuable time in discussing the Speech from the Throne, when there is urgent legislation waiting to be considered. I believe that Canadian people are watching very critically to see if this new parliament can change its old fashioned ways and become an efficient and dignified institution which can deal effectively and quickly with the nation's business.

The Speech from the Throne forecast reforms in parliamentary procedure. It is quite apparent to most Canadians that very drastic reforms are required. I hope that we will get on with this job as quickly as possible. Undue delay will not be tolerated by our constituents, who must have their confidence in our parliamentary institutions restored. I will do everything in my power to help bring our procedures up-to-date.

There is another subject on which I would like to comment briefly, Mr. Speaker. It is the subject of labour-management disputes. Several disputes in recent months have been of great concern to western Canada. It was reassuring to hear from the Minister of Labour (Mr. Mackasey) that the strike of the lake-head grain handlers has not, in his opinion, caused any loss of grain sales or markets. Might I add that his efforts and the efforts of his department, which finally resulted in a settlement of that strike, are very much appreciated by most western people, even though we farmers know we will eventually have to pay the shot.

It does seem to me, however, that strikes such as the ones we have endured this summer should not be such a constant threat. Surely, in this day and age some method can be found to settle labour-management disputes before they reach the strike or lock-out stage. Reference was made by the Minister of