

Federal-Provincial Fiscal Arrangements

has been in place, functioning to the advantage of prairie grain producers.

I could mention as well the substantial increases in the level of available cash advances, and broader, more flexible repayment opportunities for producers. I could mention improvements in the timing of Canadian Wheat Board final payments and adjustment cheques; the implementation of the deferred cash ticket option on grain deliveries; the provision of the best available production and marketing information to farmers regularly and early each year well in advance of seeding.

There have been determined efforts, which have been largely successful, to remove the inequities in our system of domestic feed grains marketing to provide farmers with a freedom of choice and to allow our natural production advantages to prevail. We have seen the establishment of a separate marketing pool for malting barley, effective for the 1975-76 crop year; a new quota system; the block shipping system; and the producer election of the advisory committee to the Canadian Wheat Board which is now enshrined in the Canadian Wheat Board Act itself.

A poll has been carried out amongst rapeseed producers regarding their preferred method of rapeseed marketing, and now legislation is before the House to facilitate the voluntary pooling of producer returns from rapeseed sales to provide flexibility and again a freedom of choice.

We have seen the purchase of 6,000 grain hopper cars, with at least 2,000 more on order, to speed the movement of prairie grain to export positions. We have seen a boxcar repair program put into effect; the Mants report on boxcar allocation procedures; the appointment of port co-ordinators for Thunder Bay and Vancouver. Recently we've had the widely respected report of the Snively Commission on the costs of transporting grain by rail, and soon the Hall Commission report on grain handling and transportation. That report is in its final stages of preparation after months of public hearings and careful deliberations which have established a solid base of credibility and trust for the commission's work.

I would also like to mention that after six years of determined, conscientious work we now have in place the Western Grains Stabilization Plan which commits millions of federal dollars annually to supporting the strength and stability of the western grains economy, a plan which even today is beginning to prove its substantial merit and value to individual grain producers and to the grains economy of western Canada generally, as we see, unfortunately, a weakening trend in world markets and prices, and at the same time costs of production continuing to increase. It is obvious that the Western Grains Stabilization Plan—a plan which was opposed and obstructed at every step by the gentlemen opposite—will, in the course of the next several months, establish clearly and categorically its unparalleled value to western Canadian grain producers.

I suggest that that is a rather impressive "check list" of accomplishments affecting the western Canadian grains industry, an industry which is fundamental to the west, and this tends to belie the kind of negative cynicism which unfortunately we hear expressed so often by the gentlemen across the way.

[Mr. Goodale.]

I should not leave the question of western alienation without reference to a major event which occurred about four years ago and which has yielded tangible results for the west since that time. I am thinking of the Western Economic Opportunities Conference held in Calgary in 1973.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Goodale: The gentlemen across the way do not like to recall that conference, just as they do not like to recall the list of achievements in the grains industry, because they know that their opposition to the items that have affected the grains industry and their skepticism and belittling of the Western Economic Opportunities Conference are not at all to their credit. It only establishes once again that cynicism and pessimism which have the effect, not only in the west but in other parts of the country, of contributing to national disunity and fueling the fires of separatism, of which they take political advantage whenever and wherever they can.

What has resulted from the Western Economic Opportunities Conference is, for example, our railway cost disclosure legislation, the response to another long-standing request of the provinces regarding more direct information from the railways about their costing factors. That legislation is now on our books, something that the gentlemen opposite forget only too easily. They also ignore the establishment of an important federal-provincial consultative institution known as the federal-provincial conference on western transportation involving all the ministers in western Canada with their federal counterpart and all the relevant officials who have been meeting constantly ever since the Western Economic Opportunities Conference to deal with western transportation concerns and to develop a consensus as to how they should be handled. I would mention also Bill C-33, which is on the order paper, dealing with the National Transportation Act, amendments proposed to eliminate largely the long-haul short-haul anomalies which westerners have complained about for so long. It also contains amendments dealing with maximum and minimum freight rates which can be charged by the railways, and provides a mechanism whereby the CTC can police more actively the freight rate tariffs filed by the railways. All of those were items on the table in Calgary in 1973 which the western premiers indicated they wanted rectified, and which are coming forward now for that kind of correction in Bill C-33.

We have seen as well such things as the highways strengthening program in western Canada, the Northlands Agreement, the iron and steel developmental agreement in Saskatchewan, and recognition of a larger provincial role to be played in financial institutions. As I said, hon. gentlemen across the way like to ignore the list.

Miss MacDonald: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I wonder if it would be possible for the hon. member for Assiniboia (Mr. Goodale) to come into the twentieth century and to recognize that it is hon. members on this side of the House.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!