

FOREIGN INVESTMENT REVIEW AGENCY

TABLING OF ANNUAL REPORT

Hon. Sinclair Stevens (Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to the provisions of Standing Order 47(2) I wish to table in both official languages what most Members of the House wanted to see for years. I refer to the final annual report under the Foreign Investment Review Act. That is right, the final report from FIRA.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Some Hon. Members: Resign.

Mr. Stevens: The next report in this area of Canadian and non-Canadian investment will cover the activities of Investment Canada, a much more positive approach.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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AGRICULTURE

PRAIRIE GRAIN ADVANCE PAYMENTS—STATEMENT OF MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE

Hon. Charles Mayer (Minister of State (Canadian Wheat Board)): Mr. Speaker, anyone who has paid much attention to what has been taking place with respect to the weather in western Canada in the past few months will know there have been some very severe problems. They have ranged from very severe drought over the growing season and grasshopper infestation as a result of that drought and high temperatures in the southern part of the provinces, particularly Saskatchewan and Alberta, to large amounts of rainfall and snow since the middle of August. There have been reports of as much as a foot of snow on occasion in the southern parts of Saskatchewan and Manitoba in particular.

Consequently, the amount of harvesting that has been able to be carried out under normal conditions has been very limited. These conditions are rather abnormal, although not unique. The last time we had such conditions was in 1968 and those of us who have been here longer will know that the last time we experienced such conditions previous to 1968 was in 1951.

However, much has changed since 1968. Not only is there much more drying capacity on the Prairies but it is much more efficient in terms of drying and maintaining the quality of grain that goes into the dryer.

A week ago today I had a meeting with grain industry officials in Winnipeg, which involved the grain companies, the Canadian Wheat Board, the Canadian Grain Commission, the grain transportation agencies and the terminal operators at Vancouver and Thunder Bay, to get an assessment of the situation with regard to the harvest including how much grain is still there, how much has been harvested in a tough and damp state and the extent of our drying capacity on the Prairies.

Statements by Ministers

The preliminary results would indicate that if everyone co-operates and makes the use of the drying capacity we have, it appears that we can dry the crop we have in its present condition.

However, the area in which I believe the Government must show some leadership concerns the fact that about two-thirds of the drying capacity we have for handling this crop in the condition in which it is being harvested is on prairie farms. Therefore, anything that we can do as far as the federal Government is concerned to encourage people to dry grain on the farms will be very worth-while. Hence, I have the pleasure to announce today that the federal Government is making available, under the Prairie Grain Advance Payments Act, a \$3,000 cash advance.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

● (1510)

Mr. Mayer: This is a \$3,000 interest-free cash advance that is available on top of the interest free cash advances available normally. It is available on wheat, oats and barley, and is to be calculated on the basis of \$9 a ton for wheat, \$11 a ton for barley and \$16 a ton for oats. It is a little larger than the discount shown at elevators that one receives for delivering tough and damp grain. I hope it is an incentive for prairie producers to make the best uses they can in terms of working with neighbours and anybody else who can help in making the best use of drying facilities.

The forms are already printed, Mr. Speaker, and are in the mail this afternoon. Farmers will be able to go to the elevators as soon as the forms arrive, which I expect will be in the next day or so, certainly by the beginning of the week, to apply for the cash advances.

In addition to that, I have put in place a reporting system to keep up-to-date information literally available on a daily basis so as to make sure we do everything we can to co-ordinate the drying capacity we have on the Prairies.

I have a couple of other points. First, there was some concern on the Prairies that the amount of propane necessary for drying is not available. On checking into the matter, I am assured that the propane is in production. The problem is one of distribution. I am also informed that as of now there is a 24 delivery period at the most as far as having energy in the form of propane to dry the grain is concerned.

Second, there is another provision under the Prairie Grain Advance Payments Act. If sufficient harvesting has not been completed by November 15, we will look at the situation very closely and make available additional cash advances for unthrashed grain giving producers an opportunity to complete their harvest.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Maurice Foster (Algoma): Mr. Speaker, we have to be thankful for every blessing, and even small blessings like this.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!