

work on extending credit for the Canadian Wheat Board—all of these items in the grain area are a monument marking the constant determination of the government to take steps, as those steps are required, to improve the position of western Canada, and in particular of the grain industry. Those steps, and other things done since the Western Opportunities Conference, show that the government is fully committed to the improvement of conditions for western Canada, and to a new national policy which will meet the aspirations of western Canada.

There are those in politics in Canada who would like to suggest that in some fashion the government is prepared to write off the west from a political point of view. To them, and to all hon. members of the House I wish to say that nothing could be farther from the truth. It is the intention of the government to pursue its long and historic role of attempting to find the policies and programs which are satisfactory and fair to all sections of the country. It is true that the job we face in regaining support for our party in the prairie region may be a long and hard one, and it is going to be a longer and a harder one because of the simple fire power that is possessed by other parties. I stress that that fire power is sometimes pretty simple. It takes false situations and distortions, and spreads them about, stirring up discontent, which it then seizes on in order to make ground in a political manner.

It feeds on the kinds of things we heard from the hon. member for Crowfoot just before he sat down earlier today, when he asked wasn't it just like this government that we have controls on wheat, feed grain and oil. But what are the facts, Mr. Speaker? The hon. member mentioned feed grains, and I asked what did he mean by speaking of controls on feed grains? I know of none that are holding down the price of feed grains in terms of returns to farmers in the prairie region. But, of course, this will not stop the hon. member for Crowfoot, and other hon. members opposite, because the simple truth of the matter is that we can never expect them to hold off if they feel that they can stir discontent in the prairie region in an attempt to gain political advantage.

In the case of oil, we have had discussions concerning what a fair price for oil ought to be when a free market no longer exists throughout the world. I suggest to hon. members opposite, particularly to those from the west, that there is no sound reason why we in Canada have to accept a cartel price imposed from abroad, and definitely not any more than we would want to accept a cartel price imposed from inside our country. But that is quite a different question from wage and price controls. Incidentally, I was interested to note that the hon. member for Crowfoot disagrees with his party leadership in recognizing the futility of controls, and he said so directly.

Where are the controls on the price of wheat, Mr. Speaker? In fact what we have is a stabilized price, with a stipulated floor price and a maximum of \$5 in terms of returns to the producers. It is quite wrong to categorize a floor-ceiling arrangement as if it were only a stipulated ceiling price. It is as a result of the \$5 price that the consumer in Canada is benefiting by some 70 cents or 80 cents with respect to the grain he purchases, just as the producers benefited when, during a long period of time, we held the price of wheat in Canada above the world

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wheat price when that price fell below the levels set out in the International Grains Agreement. In the same way the consumer, in times ahead, may pay more in terms of bread if the international price falls below the present floor. But, Mr. Speaker, that is not a control. That is not a matter to which the hon. member can point as though it were in some way contrary to the interests of western Canada. This is an example of the kind of difficulty that will exist when we are attempting to demonstrate to the people of western Canada the firmness of the government's intention to meet the aspirations of western Canada with a new national policy.

I say that what has been done in the case of grains, the fantastic turn around in that area in recent years, and the tremendous efforts of the government will stand as a monument, as evidence of what we are doing, and will be doing in pursuing the objectives and spirit of the Western Economic Opportunities Conference.

When the hon. member for Saskatoon-Biggar (Mr. Gleave) was speaking the other day in this debate he once again started his speech, as he has done for some four years now, with some remarks about the LIFT program. I always find it interesting that opposition members, in seizing on one thing which they feel is simple to point to as an error, have to go back four years to 1970 to find something in the grain area. They ignore the hopper cars, the two-price wheat, and the other things that we have done. The trouble with picking on this particular program is their error in how they treat it. Once again, the hon. member for Saskatoon-Biggar did what opposition members are so likely to do. He suggested that the LIFT program discouraged the planting of barley and rapeseed, forgetting that it was directed only in relation to wheat at a time when we had 1,100,000,000 bushels of wheat on hand, with a new crop ready to come off the land. In fact that program encouraged people who wanted to grow anything to go into barley and rapeseed. In fact, Mr. Speaker, we moved to record volumes of barley and rapeseed.

Through that program we were allowed to cope with the tremendous amount of wheat we had on hand, in elevators and on the farms, and one result of that was that we could move other grain such as rapeseed and barley more efficiently. This allowed us to achieve record volumes of exports that year and in each of the succeeding years, so that for four years in a row we have exported more than we produced. In those four years, Mr. Speaker, we have moved grain out of this country at a fantastic rate and still, by next August 1, we will have in reserve about the amount of grain which the prairie premiers last July said was the right amount to have in reserve in this country. That is four years after LIFT, Mr. Speaker, and after four years of exporting more than we have produced.

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Those are the facts about the program; it was a program which allowed us to revise the quota system; to put the emphasis on marketing and move from an old pattern of inefficiency and ineffectiveness to a sensible system with information to the farmer and production by the farmer. From 1970 until the year which we are approaching, the farmer has not felt that he wanted to build up his stocks of grain to the extent that he would fertilize to the degree