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BREAKING NEWS AT THESTARPHOENIX.COM

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MARKETING CHOICE ARRIVES

Gov't bill would nix monopoly

BRUCE JOHNSTONE
LEADER-POST

REGINA — Legislation to end the Canadian Wheat Board's nearly 70-year-old monopoly on the export sale of western wheat and barley was introduced in Parliament Tuesday including provisions to remove the board's 10 farmer-elected directors and replace them with five government appointees.

"The Marketing Freedom for Grain Farmers Act will give western Canadian grain farmers the right to choose how they sell their wheat and barley," Agriculture Minister Gerry Ritz said in a statement. "Our government is delivering on our long-standing promise to give western Canadian grain farmers marketing freedom, just as they have when selling their canola or pulses."

The legislation will allow an "interim CWB" to act as a voluntary marketing entity, supported by the federal government, while it transitions into full private ownership," says a news release from Ritz's office.

Ottawa will guarantee

CWB loans and initial payments to farmers during the five-year transition period. The legislation will also allow farmer and companies to forward contract for the delivery of grain after Aug. 1, 2012, when the single desk is removed.

The Harper government also promises to provide up to \$5 million per year for five years to support the shipment of grain through the Port of Churchill, as well as up to \$4.1 million over three years to maintain the northern Manitoba port during the transition phase.

But Allen Oberg, chair of the CWB's board of directors, said the act is a betrayal of western Canadian farmers, who will lose democratic control of the CWB, as well as an estimated \$300 million in price premiums the CWB receives by being the largest marketer of wheat and barley in the world.

"This is not about putting farmers in the drivers' seat — it's about removing us altogether and handing the steering wheel to the huge foreign corporations that control the world's grain trade," Oberg said in a conference call Tuesday.

Oberg said the Harper government is erasing all the gains farmers made in 1998 when the then-Liberal government gave farmers the right to elect 10 out of 15 seats on the CWB.

See WHEAT, A6



GREG PENDER/The StarPhoenix

Mina Robert, now in her eighties, and her husband, Roland, have been farming outside of Saskatoon since 1950, and wheat has been a large part of their operation. Legislation to end the Canadian Wheat Board's monopoly on the export sale of western wheat and barley was introduced in Parliament on Tuesday.

SASKATCHEWAN PARTY

Wall outlines rural health-care plan

JASON WARICK
THE STARPHOENIX

NORTH BATTLEFORD — A new Saskatchewan Party government would forgive \$120,000 in student loans for any doctor willing to work in an underserved rural community for five years.

Party leader Brad Wall made the promise Tuesday as part of a five-point health-care plan, which also includes student debt forgiveness for nurses and nurse practitioners, more training seats for nurse practitioners and enhanced emergency services

ONLINE
TheStarPhoenix.com

Please see video of Saskatchewan Party Leader Brad Wall announcing his health platform

for rural areas.

Speaking to a couple of dozen supporters at the campaign office of Battlefords Sask. Party candidate Herb Cox, Wall said his government has "made much progress" on improving health care in the past four years, but admits there is more work to be done.

Wall said if re-elected,

his five-point plan will cost roughly \$8.5 million in the coming year, rising to a maximum of \$10 million annually by its fourth year of implementation.

"It's very achievable. It's affordable."

The plan includes:

- Forgiving up to \$120,000 of student loans for doctors and up to \$20,000 for nurses and nurse practitioners who work in "underserved rural and northern communities" for five years;
- Increase the number of nurse practitioner training spots to 50 from the

current 30;

- Establish a 20-doctor pool to serve rural communities for short relief periods;
- Expand pilot projects for emergency services in rural areas;
- Launch the previously announced emergency medical helicopter program, Shock Trauma Air Rescue Society (STARS).

Indian Head-Milestone Sask. Party candidate Don McMorris, who is health minister, accompanied Wall to the North Battleford announcement. He said the initiatives will make Saskatchewan

STUDY Families need 'New Deal'

BETTY ANN ADAM
THE STARPHOENIX

Canada needs a "New Deal for Families" to solve the enormous social and economic upheaval caused by soaring housing costs, creators of a study released Tuesday at the University of Saskatchewan say.

The generation raising children today has less money and time than baby boomers, despite a doubling in size of the Canadian economy since 1976, said Paul Kershaw, a family policy expert from the University of British Columbia.

"Young families are squeezed for time at home, they're squeezed for income because of the cost of housing and they are squeezed for services like child care that would balance earning a living and having time for their families," Kershaw said.

In 1976, the average house in Saskatchewan cost slightly more than twice the average family's household annual income.

The average house was \$145,000 in today's dollars in 1976 but now, it is almost \$245,000, which is four times today's average family income, said Nazem Muhajarine, a Saskatchewan researcher whose team worked with Kershaw and his colleagues on the report.

The change represents a 68 per cent increase in the cost of a house during a period when the average household income went up only six per cent after adjusting for inflation, Muhajarine said.

The current family experience is different from that of the boomer generation because household incomes today are no higher than they were then, but it now takes two people to earn the same total amount, Kershaw said.

Parents have less time at home with their kids and there's a lack of the services they need while they're working.



MORE INSIDE

NDP promises additional child-care space. **Page A7**
 Special interest groups embrace election. **Page A7**
 Mandryk: Social conscience alive and well. **Page A7**

competitive in the struggle to recruit and retain health care professionals.

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Today's weather



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