

and communist China. It was understood that even though the ideologies of those people were opposed to ours, they had to eat even though the foodstuffs came from Canada.

In a speech he made on February 7, the Minister of Justice said this, and I quote:

The grain position is the best Canada has ever known in many years. In certain areas there are still problems but compared to recent years, this situation is tremendous and the prospects promising. Total exports of the six main grains or leguminous plants, namely wheat, oats, barley, rye, flax and rapeseed, exceeded 824 million bushels in 1971-72. Exports during the present crop year (1972-73) should set a new record for the third successive year. Up to now, exports amounted to 423.1 million bushels compared to 406 million bushels at the same date last year.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to see that we can export and enable our farmers to increase their acreages under crop. But it must be kept in mind that if there is a shortage of wheat throughout the world today, Canada is a little responsible for it. It will be recalled that barely three years ago, the Canadian government granted subsidies to western producers to abstain from sowing grain and, what is more ridiculous, at the very time when we were paying people not to sow their fertile land, in Newfoundland, the provincial government was making every effort to develop permanent pastures in the mountains where God did not even want a small fir to grow. And when the Standing Committee on Agriculture visited that place where a feed lot for cattle was to be set up, I specifically asked the responsible agronomist: "But where will the grass grow? There is no humus here." He made the following reply: "The soil will be carried from the shores to cover the rocks in order to develop a permanent pasture".

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At the same time, Quebec and New Brunswick had hundreds of abandoned farms whose soil was quite rich. Now, this is what happened not long ago. That was quite recently and today we find that there is a problem, that production must be encouraged. We have however to seek the best prices on the world market. I entirely agree about that.

It remains that Canada has a very interesting market for the wheat producers of the Prairies, and it is to be found both in eastern Canada and British Columbia. It was to help the producers of eastern Canada and British Columbia that, at a certain moment, the government passed an act creating the Canadian Livestock Feed Board. Well, these feed grains have been the cause of a problem for a great many years and a source of very great concern for the producers of eastern Canada. As representatives of the province of Quebec and eastern Canada, we agree that the grain producers of western Canada ought to be paid better. I want to be very clear on this.

A number of years ago, as I was visiting incognito the provinces of central Canada, I would take pleasure in meeting the grain producers there, in order to increase my awareness of their situation. I then understood more than ever that these people were right to establish such a body as the Canadian Wheat Board to secure the sale of their products. And I was very surprised to find out that many of them were not entirely satisfied with this body and

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wanted it to be more within their reach and operate in such a way as to boost their income.

Well, it is the same for eastern farmers. We hope that the Canadian Livestock Feed Board will do its job. That is why it was set up. I will quote the preamble of the Canadian Livestock Feed Board annual report, crop year 1971-72, which reads as follows:

The Canadian Livestock Feed Board is a Crown Corporation reporting to Parliament through the Minister of Agriculture. Established under the Livestock Feed Assistance Act in 1967, its objectives are to ensure: (a) the availability of feed grain in Eastern Canada and British Columbia. (b) the availability of adequate storage space in Eastern Canada, and (c) the reasonable stability and fair equalization of feed grain prices in Eastern Canada and in British Columbia.

We are still hoping that the board will achieve its objective not only as regards supplies but also prices, to give equal opportunities to all Canadian producers. Now and then we hear people talk about separatism, independence, all kinds of similar issues, but always at the political level.

But as regards feed grain, I feel that a kind of economic separatism is being exercised, and the federal government is responsible for introducing legislation in order to give all the regions of Canada equal opportunities in the area of economic affairs, as regards both agricultural products and other kinds of products.

Well, this is not the case. The opportunity gap between eastern and western producers of cattle, hog and eggs is unfair and western producers are not at fault. As I was saying, I quite agree that incomes should match the efforts made because they are people who have the right to live, but eastern producers have also that right.

Right now, Mr. Speaker, we are faced with an alarming situation. The dairy industry has experienced a sharp decrease in production. As an example, the president of the Coopérative Fédérée du Québec, Mr. Pigeon, stated recently that the auction sale of dairy herds is disturbing, and there are reasons for that. Why do people give up this occupation? Because production costs are rising at an alarming rate.

Before coming into the House a moment ago, I telephoned a co-operative manager to ask him the price of feed grain for dairy herds. He told me that it was \$119 a ton, that is \$32 more than in October last. What is the current price of piglet starter feed? He told me \$158 or \$34 more than in October. The starter feed costs \$164 or \$36 more than in October, while the price of eggs has not changed very much.

In the dairy industry, precisely because of a difficult situation, a poor crop and heavy rains last fall, the winter has been difficult and the animals grew unhealthy because of improper feeding. A great many animals died in Quebec in my region, and that greatly affected the production of meat. And that same thing happened to our neighbours, which is why full vans of animals are exported over the border. They come and buy our heifers alive at \$1, \$1.15 and \$1.20 a pound. Mr. Speaker, people complain that the price of beef is high and fear we might face shortages soon. But the situation will worsen for sure if no action is taken, if the necessary measures are not taken to give producers the possibility of obtaining feed grains at