

Agriculture

Mr. Whelan: The fact that there was overproduction of pork in Canada also had a depressing effect on all other forms of meat consumed in Canada, whether it be poultry or beef. That was the free, productive system working to its full capacity or capability.

Mr. Kilgour: So let's socialize the industry!

Mr. Whelan: Some of the most efficient producers in Canada are suffering unnecessarily. It is not because of being non-productive, but as a result of putting too much product on the market. In essence, what some of the hon. members are suggesting is that we subsidize the U.S. economy because, for instance, pork products—

Mr. Kilgour: Balderdash!

Mr. Whelan: People are going bankrupt in the pork production industry. For instance, practically 30 per cent of their production goes to the United States. Therefore, they are putting it in the United States below the cost of production, and yet they are saying to the federal government that it must subsidize them. We are not controlling them on subsidization. They are making their own decisions. The finance establishments of this country were the ones which lent them the money.

Referring to the Farm Credit Corporation, it was set up to be the lender of last resort, not the lender of first application. It was to be the lender after all other lending institutions said no. Therefore, we encourage the private lending institutions to get into the lending business. However, it is obvious to me that a lot of them did not know what they were doing and did not understand agriculture. They made tremendous loans to these people.

When one talks about giving them the short-term money and paying \$80,000 a year in interest, we know that that is reference to no ordinary farm. I am talking about some of the young farmers who are maybe paying \$80,000 a year in interest, and then having the banks move in and foreclose this year because they get scared. I am saying that the banks should be giving them a stay of time, because I am sure some of these red meat industries will come around in time, but they need a stay so they can get back on their feet. However, they need some better marketing system than they have at the present time.

I have probably farmed as much in this country as anyone has, as much as many agricultural people, and more than most, as far as that goes. Sometimes we have talked with farm organizations, agribusiness groups with special concerns, service clubs, you name them, chambers of commerce or boards of trade. We have talked to them about agricultural policy to try to get their opinions.

Mr. Kilgour: That's just terrific!

Mr. Whelan: —to try to get their opinions.

Mr. Kilgour: Just speak to the subject, Gene; do not tell us what a great guy you are, okay?

Mr. Whelan: Well, Mr. Speaker, you have an assistant over there who seems to want to sit in your chair. I do not know. Maybe Your Honour should offer it to him, because the hon. member seems to be an expert on everything.

Mr. Kilgour: Just speak to the motion, Gene.

Mr. Whelan: So the hon. member is giving Your Honour a little free advice, which is about as much as it is worth, too.

Mr. Kilgour: Oh, that's fantastic!

Mr. Whelan: In most cases, my speeches are printed. I have to say they are made available to the media and to a wide range of interested people. I am sure that the hon. member from the New Democratic Party opposite must be on the mailing list. When I read the list of things which they say should be part of a national agricultural policy for this great country, I feel as though I am reading some of my own speeches. That must be where the hon. member got the idea.

Mr. Kilgour: Sit down, Gene!

Mr. Whelan: I just want to say that it is easy and to see that the NDP members opposite have never had the responsibility of being in office and forming the government. Converting policies into laws, plans and programs is not something which is done at a snap of one's finger. We are a responsible and representative government, and the laws must be debated and approved both by the Commons and the Senate. What is even more important, as far as agriculture is concerned, is that we are a confederation of provinces. Each of those ten governments has considerable jurisdiction and authority in the field of farm policy.

Mr. Kilgour: Hear, hear!

Mr. Whelan: We worked very closely together. The hon. member for Huron-Bruce referred to stabilization. It is longer than two years ago that I proposed to the provinces that we join in a national stabilization program. This would produce harmony. I know the hon. member knows, just as well as I do, and just as sure as he is sitting there, what the farm organization said about Whelan's plan at that time. It said it was too lucrative and would cause too much production. That would have been with producer and federal government participation. Only one province really endorsed that, that is the province we both come from, namely, Ontario. The province said it was a good program and should proceed, but we did not have enough participation from the rest of Canada, so it did not. Now, from the telegrams, letters, and responses from delegations I am receiving, it is evident that they want that kind of plan. However, that kind of plan was proposed to them again two years ago. We will be talking to them again, not this month, but in July, when we meet with the provincial ministers in Alberta. At that time, we will again be proposing harmonization and stabilization to see if they will pick it up.

I am sure that all hon. members of this House are well aware that we have a national stabilization program. It provides for mandatory stabilization of a certain number of what