

Supply

called on their people, and we know that you can pay no higher compliment to these people than by calling on them and saying, "We want to do business with you."

We can sell products there that we have every right to be proud of. We need not worry about the quality of our products, they can stand close scrutiny, because whether we sell grain, meat or anything else, the quality is high. We have nothing to be ashamed of in the sale of our products and this is a great credit to our producers. Notwithstanding the costs that we are subjected to in Canada, we can compete on world markets with any country in the world. We have more and better salesmen on the road than ever before, and they are doing a better job than ever before in selling our products. I am optimistic about our trade in future. People know that when they buy Canadian, they buy well; they buy the best products in the world.

Mr. Benjamin: But Alvin was there first.

Mr. Whelan: May I mention something else, Mr. Chairman. Having done some research and made telephone calls, I wish to report—this may please members from Saskatchewan and Alberta—that the price of fertilizer will not increase. I received a call from one of the largest fertilizer companies—

Mr. Nielsen: That explains the speech.

Mr. Whelan: Let us be careful. This is a large co-operative company, a large fertilizer company. I was told that there would be no increase in the price of fertilizer.

An hon. Member: Not any more; it has already gone up.

Mr. Whelan: There is to be no price increase. The price will be the same as it was last August for all Alberta; it will not change in that area.

An hon. Member: Are there ample supplies?

Mr. Whelan: They have ample supplies. They had problems bringing in phosphates from the coast, from B.C. We have already made representations to the railroads and asked them to help. The company says it has all the phosphates it needs. All the other ingredients are to be found on the prairies in western Canada. Therefore, there is to be no price increase, no matter what anyone else says. This company is to be a price-setter, or pace-setter in the price of this product. At least that is one good bit of news, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Knight: On a point of order, Mr. Chairman, would the minister entertain a question?

Mr. Whelan: Yes, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Knight: In the Peace River country the price of fertilizer increased from \$34 a ton in 1972 to \$46 a ton in 1973. In view of this, can the minister say if the people he has spoken about indicated that they intend to roll-back the price to previous levels?

Mr. Whelan: Mr. Chairman, I can only repeat what the honest gentleman told me, that his prices will not change from what they were last July and August. The prices are on the price-lists which are being prepared. The product

[Mr. Whelan.]

is being sold and delivered to our markets every day at that price.

Mr. Knight: Mr. Chairman, I hope the minister will look into this matter carefully, because the price in January went up by at least \$10 per ton.

The Deputy Chairman: Order, please. The hon. member knows he cannot take advantage of a question for the purpose of making a statement or comment. It is very difficult for the Chair, especially in committee of the whole when hon. members converse across the floor, to tell whether an hon. member is rising on a point of order or for the purpose of asking a question, because sometimes hon. members seek the floor to make points and arguments rather than to receive replies to questions.

Mr. McCain: Mr. Chairman, it was a pleasure listening to the Minister of Agriculture giving his dissertation tonight. In view of statements reported in the press and attributed to him, I had hoped that we might now be engaged in debate on a most serious topic, that of putting agriculture on the course which it has for so long deserved to follow. I was particularly interested in his remarks relating to hog production. In effect, he told the hog producers not to approach the government again, for "The machinery has been established to enable you to put your own house in order, and it is up to you now."

I think we ought to review the circumstances which resulted in the glut of hogs on the market in Canada. We should examine the situation as it was in years far back, because we will find that it was the incompetence of the government and its grain selling policies that allowed grain to build up inside the granaries and outside. Farmers could only find markets for beef, hogs or poultry. Farmers diversified in the only way they could and produced meat.

As a result of government policy, producers, in programs involving provincial and federal co-operation, encountered a situation which made it possible for them to produce hogs and, in particular, eggs at rates which had not been heard of before. The result was not only disaster for western hog producers but, equally, disaster for eastern hog producers. We have received no assurance today that the situation is to be put right. Actually, we have reason in the east to shudder with fear and trembling in case there will be a repetition of policies which will again permit or encourage the massive production of livestock on the prairies. Until such time as we can back up effectively, with legislation, programs involving self-control or bureaucratic control for agricultural products, we need a total, over-all basic agricultural policy. This we have lacked and this we continue to lack, as was made evident by the minister's speech this evening.

For proof of my statement let me direct the attention of hon. members to catalogue No. 21-202 of the Dominion Bureau of Statistics, to do with farm net income for 1970. It covers the period 1926-1970. It is significant to note that net farm income in 1970 was only slightly better than that for 1946-1950.

An hon. Member: Shame!