

directly to lower bread prices in Canada by agreeing not to gouge the last dollar per bushel out of Canadian consumers. That is a measure of the willingness of our farmers to help the consumer, being able to recognize a good thing at hand and able to look ahead and weigh the consequences. Some may wonder what I mean. Let me point out that the world price of wheat right now is \$1 over what the domestic consumer is paying, so in reality you can say that the farmers are directly subsidizing the consumers by approximately \$1 per bushel for all wheat that goes into the production of flour in Canada.

An hon. Member: Tell that to the western farmer.

Mr. Whelan: I think you are forgetting that there are some of us who farm in western Ontario and other areas who are producing the same grains, with about 90 per cent of that production going to domestic use and only 10 per cent being exported. Therefore, on a per capita basis these farmers are contributing perhaps much more.

The government also intends to change farm credit legislation to make it easier for young farmers to start farming.

An hon. Member: That is a Conservative policy.

Mr. Whelan: I note that an hon. member suggests this is a Conservative policy. I note that he has been reading some of my speeches and is adopting some of my ideas.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Whelan: Some of them have been made a part of their programs, and I hope the hon. member for St. John's East (Mr. McGrath) will go along with that. He seems to take some pride in lambasting a group of people who are trying to help in the egg marketing field. I have heard him say nothing about other marketing boards, two of which are in his province and have done an excellent job on behalf of fish producers there. They have actually increased the income of fishermen to a level they have never enjoyed before but to which they are entitled. I should like to hear the hon. member say something about that at an early date.

About 62 per cent of Canada's farmers are 45 years of age or older and will reach retirement age during the next 20 years. We often hear Members of Parliament, who should know better, harping about the income farmers are receiving, knowing full well that anyone can still enter agriculture if he wants to work on an average of 77 hours a week and receive less income than those working an average of 33½ hours a week. Anyone can still go into agriculture; it is not a closed shop. This is a great part of our society which receives a great deal less in relation to hours of work and the investment.

We need young farmers for the future. Improvements in price and income stabilization will be a great help, and there has been a trend as a result of certain measures for young people to take the step and go back into the agricultural industry.

Young farmers also need long-term credit to set up farm operations that will provide a reasonable level of income. As Minister of Agriculture it is not my intention to recommend that anybody enter agriculture with its high risks

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and the amount of capital investment required without some guarantee of a reasonable level of return.

The government will provide long-term credit under certain conditions. The government is proposing a further three-year extension of the Farm Improvement Loans Act under which farmers can obtain government-guaranteed loans to purchase and modernize equipment. Individual borrowing limits will be raised in keeping with the cost of topnotch machinery and equipment. Parliament will be asked to guarantee greatly increased funds available under this program.

Hon. members know that I believe orderly marketing is a goal that benefits farmers without costing consumers any more in the prices they pay for food. Some people in this House and in this city who are not farmers like myself do not seem to be convinced about this yet. They do not realize that we have the most efficient group of people in the world producing food. That is something they must realize or they cannot expect to have these people continue to produce food for them.

No one can dispute that disorderly marketing causes extreme price fluctuations, strains on storage, disrupts handling, breaks down the operation of transportation facilities and creates a need for surplus processing facilities which then lie idle or under-used for a good part of the year. Meanwhile, much produce is wasted for lack of appropriate handling while some markets and people go short six months later, with prices rising as a result. This is especially true when we do not have Canadian-produced food and our markets and people are dependent upon imports.

We have some economists in this nation, and even some Members of Parliament, who think we should produce until produce is coming out of the farmer's ears and then hope we will find markets for that produce. Such a philosophy does not lend itself toward a guarantee of any kind of production stability, and that is something I will not adopt in respect of the agricultural industry in this nation. Meanwhile, a great deal of produce cannot be marketed, and that is why our storage program is now what it is. I intend to extend our programs in this regard in the coming months.

Everyone knows that I am not a professor of economics.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Whelan: Thank God for that. I was recently shown a record an individual kept in respect of the world's best known economists. The astounding fact is that not one of them had ever been right.

Mr. Stanfield: They are all different, so some of them must be right.

Mr. Whelan: The getting in and out of production, the tooling-up of expensive machinery only to let it stand and rust one or two years later, repeated on a large scale from farm producers to the retail shelf, are eventually paid for by the consumer in higher food prices. One does not need a degree in anything to understand that.

We are, therefore, taking measures to improve marketing, among them the cash advance payments system which has worked so well for prairie grain growers. The govern-