

Feed Grains

There is the testimony of a knowledgeable man. That is why I say that we must be very careful, and especially the government, before accepting this or that formula as an experience. I know this always entails some risk, but we must be increasingly concerned about possible results before adopting a policy that is suggested; we must analyze it as carefully as possible to avoid serious errors.

Yet, economists have the duty—to my mind, they are paid for that—to give more serious advice to the government on the eventual needs of our country from the point of view of food in years to come. I think this work is rather complicated, but they made studies to simplify those things, so that we are better advised and able to establish programs which will better serve the Canadian people, particularly producers and consumers. They should be able to indicate effective means to take in order to boost our production, to ensure prices which are tailored to the financial resources of the population and to enable at the same producers to make a fair and reasonable profit margin.

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We witnessed a reduction in the seeded acreage in the Prairies in recent years and we have now the repercussions of these reductions. The price of essential materials is going up, and notably the cost of feed grains just at the moment when in the whole world there is a serious problem of food, which is so alarming.

I recently attended a farmers' wives convention in the province of Québec, those women stand as a good example for men. It is now difficult to gather many men to study our problems, yet nearly 1,000 women studied very specific problems as food, the cost of food and the measures to take in order to solve this issue.

Mr. Speaker, I notice that my time is running out, but I should like to say we have an agricultural industry which not only enables farmers to live but at the same time contributes to provide jobs for many thousands of persons. There are all kinds of related industries which depend on agriculture and if this industry is not effective the related industries will automatically feel the repercussions. It is sufficient to see, for instance, the reduction in the production of meat in Canada, which is a less important change. This means there is less transport and automatically that we need less labor, which contributes to increasing the problem of unemployment. Consumers themselves are also interested in helping us finding solutions to this situation in order to be able to keep on increasing cattle production and food production of all sorts in Canada.

We are concerned with the way things are going now in the province of Quebec. I referred to this some weeks ago. I gave figures and the situation has not changed. You only have to talk with our farmers, with those directly engaged in the dairy industry, to find out that it is not the small producers, but the big ones who have seen the sharp increase in prices and who worry about the possibility of making revenues to face their obligations, to repay the debts that they have incurred last year in order to buy better equipment to be able to produce more, as economically as possible and face the shortage of manpower.

So, these producers, rather than seeing their business going under, although they worked harder, have preferred

[Mr. Lambert (Bellechasse).]

to give up their operation. They are selling their dairy herd and automatically, even if it is bought by other producers, a number of dairy cows end up at the slaughterhouse and will not yield anything next year. This means that in the spring of 1974, there will be a reduction in the food production volume and I am afraid that in a year or two, eating a beefsteak will be the privilege of the rich. The low income people will have to be content with sausages and secondary products and will not be able to buy prime beef. This is inhuman we can do much better than that in Canada.

I am also concerned about another problem stated in an article of *La Presse* of June 12, 1973, entitled: "Pork producers fear U.S. pressures on Ottawa". I hope it is groundless. In any case, I draw the attention of the minister of Agriculture to this article which reads as follows:

—The Canadian government has been requested by the United States to eliminate the subsidizing of feed grains transportation (for the feeding of cattle) between East and West.

Some say that Quebecers are at an advantage and the farmers from the eastern United States who do not have the same privilege maintain that this is unfair competition and try to influence the Canadian government so that it cuts or eliminates transportation subsidies. It is therefore reported—and I hope this is not true—that—

—the federal minister of Agriculture, Mr. Eugene Whelan, stated last week—

—which means before June 12—

—to the representatives of the farmers' Union that he was considering eliminating those grants once of course the problem of feed grain marketing between western and eastern Canada is solved.

We will not have to wait too long. As far as I am concerned, I do not care about the formula used; if transportation grants are eliminated they will be replaced by another formula which will ensure more equity for Quebec and Maritime producers and I thank the minister in advance. But I hope that, at the same time, we will be happy to learn that, at last, after having waited 30 years, the Canadian Livestock Feed Board is adequately fulfilling its very special mission.

In a brief submitted to the standing committee on Agriculture by the Canadian Livestock Feed Board, one can read and I quote:

Before the creation of the Board, producers were faced from time to time with shortages of stocks at the Lakehead.

That is true.

On the other hand, appreciable price increases would frequently occur during the winter months—

Which is also true.

—in the harbours along the St. Lawrence River. These price increases which would reach \$4 to \$8 per ton were a source of discontent among cattle and poultry producers in the East and it was often said that export needs were met better than domestic ones. This opinion was based on the many congestions which occurred at the Lakehead and at the terminals.

When the hon. member who moved this motion talked a moment ago about the advantages which had accrued to the producers of the province of Quebec, thanks to the generosity of the Canadian Livestock Feed Board, I think he said—let him correct me, if I am wrong—that during these past couple of months, had it not been for the