

age our producers to produce as much as possible, giving them a ready market and a fair price. On top of this, Mr. Speaker, we would create employment and creating incentives seem very sensible to me because this would help Canadians to take home good wages, at the same time contributing to the needy of the world. But I suppose hon. members across the way who hold on to power by the tips of their fingers just cannot see it. They never could see this kind of sense. This is why the latest polls show the Conservatives, with their rational and well thought-out policies, especially in the field of agriculture, gaining all the time and the Liberals slipping behind.

I should like to make the following suggestion to the Prime Minister and his colleagues. Instead of the academics and theorists making policies and advising the government, why not let agricultural organizations, which are made up of farmers on the land, do this job? I think it might help. For example, it might help the consumer, the farmer and the cattleman. In fact, I am sure it would, Mr. Speaker. Certainly the government bypasses the advice of hon. members, even their own members.

I suggest that the government well the farm organizations, "Look, agriculture minister Eugene Whelan is 'Whelan' but the consumers and producers are wailin' too. Give us your advice". I suggest that the government ask the Canadian Cattlemen's Association, the Alberta Cattlefeeders Association, and Palliser Wheat Growers Association, the B.C. Cattlemen's Association, the Saskatchewan Stockmen's Association and the Ontario Beef Improvement Association, for advice. I further suggest that they listen to that advice. Let the government admit something is wrong. It must start now to rectify the situation, or face feast and famine, bust and boom, high and low cycles and other erratic situations year after year.

I am sure even the Minister of Agriculture would agree that Canadian farmers have proven their ability to produce at competitive prices. Canadians and indeed world consumers need our produce. Why, then, do we sit around living on a day to day basis and depending on hit-and-miss policies? I do not know why; neither does the consumer, the farmer not the cattleman.

I remember when Canada had a vast sheep farming population. Then the government allowed New Zealand lamb exports to come to this country and undercut Canadian prices. The sheep farmers begged Ottawa for a floor price for lamb and a subsidy for wool, but their pleas were ignored. As a result, the Canadian sheep farmer went under. How different that is from the situation in the United States, Mr. Speaker. When our farmers started to go under their sheepmen came to Canada and bought up our sheep breeding stock. Today wool prices have climbed, as have lamb prices, but the Canadian sheepman is no more. Is the Canadian cattleman destined for the same fate? I hope not.

● (1740)

Mr. Speaker this seems amazing, but look at the evidence. In the first part of this year the federal government could not even make up its mind over a feed additive called DES. It seems as though they will do anything to kill incentive. This is like the time barley was selling for 50 cents a bushel. A trucker in Lethbridge constituency

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suddenly found he could sell barley in Montana for 78 cents a bushel, considerably higher than the 50-cent price. Using a bit of Alberta initiative, the same type that most farmers have, he transported the barley down to our southern neighbour. This did not last long, because the Canadian Wheat Board found out and stopped him. This is a strange situation. The federal government does not like people to have incentive or initiative, hence the many giveaway programs which it institutes to stop people thinking for themselves.

I suggest this is bureaucracy on top of bureaucracy, figures on top of figures and statistics on top of statistics. It is no wonder the cattleman is worried, and no wonder the grain farmer will say this is a good year but will immediately ask what is in store for the next year. Should we not plan and promote a little more, rather than regulate and restrict? I think we should; and my constituents, both consumers and farmers, think so too. In fact, I think even the Liberals think so but the trouble is they have lost the will, if they ever had it, to do so. I am afraid they are running scared.

That is why the minister in charge of the Wheat Board, when announcing his new feed grains policy, would not come to Lethbridge. There are too many cattlemen there and he knew their reaction in advance. He really did not spend too long in announcing this policy in Brandon or explaining it in Edmonton. He knew beforehand this was a hit-and-miss policy: good today in this area, perhaps, and bad tomorrow in another area. What a way to run the country, what a way to run agriculture, and what a way to treat the consumer! The politics of confrontation come into play. For a government devoid of ideas, the only way out is to create false crises, pitting one segment of Canadians against another and one region of Canada against another. Why can we not work together? Perhaps we will be able to, after the next election.

I have already mentioned the problems facing the cattlemen and I have mentioned the feed additive, DES. Let me now mention the recent rail strike. During that strike I suggested to the federal Department of Transport that emergency measures be adopted in order to truck cattle to eastern markets. What was I told? They suggested that basically we raised the beef, and we should sell it, or we should ask the provincial government to create emergency transportation. It seems that Ottawa did not want to help the Canadian farmer and, what is more, it seems that it still does not want to help.

Let us consider tariffs for a moment. The federal government, with only a handful of members from the western provinces and only a handful from the Maritimes, for almost five months, took off the tariff on beef coming into Canada from the United States. The tariff on beef going to the United States remains. At the same time, the United States was buying up our feeder cattle, which later were imported back into Canada free of tariff. This is short-sighted and ironic: it is a hit-and-miss program. But this is what the Canadian cattleman, the Canadian farmer and the Canadian consumer have come to expect from Ottawa. We have a beef shortage in this country. The consumer wants beef. There is not enough beef because bureaucrats have meddled with the laws of supply and demand. At the same time, cattle feeders in Canada are experiencing