

● (2140)

The problem for the future will be to devise rules and institutions which will enable the collective bargaining process to operate smoothly and effectively within constraints. This would eliminate the unacceptable industrial disruption, unemployment, and the inflation which hurts everyone and particularly, at the present time, is seriously damaging the grain farmer in western Canada. Yet the government is not willing to come to grips with this problem. Because we are talking about stabilization, Madam Speaker, I would like to dwell just briefly on how it affects the beef industry.

Our beef industry, Madam Speaker, has suffered substantial losses this past while, and at present we have two support price policies recently announced by the Minister of Agriculture that relate only to the cattle industry. Last August 11 the support price of \$45.42 for fat steers and heifers was instituted and if deficiency payments are made when the year is up next August, I presume that they will be paid under the provisions of the original act. It is important to understand that this price of \$45.42 for grades A, B and C was determined by taking 90 per cent of the average weighted price for these three fat cattle grades at three principal markets, in Calgary, Winnipeg and Toronto, and adding to it a cost-of-production index figure as determined by the farm input price index.

The beef-cow subsidy or support policy of \$23.21, effective last November 16, is 100 per cent of average prices of the D1, D2, D3 and D4 cows over the last five years at the same three principal cattle markets, but without an indexing figure.

In dealing with the beef stabilization aspect of this program it is interesting to note there is an amendment which assures that regionalism of support prices will be recognized, but the cabinet makes this decision. It is not included in this bill and it can be assumed that the involvement of the cabinet in the regionalization process will render any decision a political one.

If I might refer to the agricultural standing committee minutes of the meeting held in the month of October at which I questioned the Minister of Agriculture as to whether there was going to be a beef program coming forward for the troubled beef industry, this was his reply, and I quote:

As soon as I can work out some kind of program that I think is suitable for the beef industry of the whole nation, because I cannot do it for one part of Canada and not the other, and as I said earlier there are different feeding programs, different costs. For instance, in Alberta you can contract for cattle to be fed for 60 cents a pound on barley. In Ontario and other parts of Canada, you can contract it on silage for 40 cents a pound. So it is a hard thing to work out a program that is going to be suitable for all these people.

What does this lead one to believe? The Minister of Agriculture did state approximately what the cost of production was, forty cents in eastern Canada and 60 cents in western Canada. Yet we have a stabilization program for the beef industry now at \$45.42. Who is going to benefit the most? Of course it is benefiting the eastern feeder again.

When is this agriculture minister going to realize that we do have western producers in this nation also, western producers who need to have substantial help now because

#### *Agricultural Stabilization Act*

of the crisis in the beef situation? I strongly believe that this is just another attempt to satisfy the main populace of our country and to neglect the western regions of Canada.

Again let me stress that the regionalization of support prices will be recognized by this bill but the cabinet makes this decision, not the bill, and this decision could very easily be a political one. Let me also suggest that since this stabilization program will take in the past five year period, that during that same five year period agricultural production costs have increased at a much faster rate than did our market prices at the farm gate. This is a very significant point and I ask the minister to take consideration of it.

In closing let me state that I appreciated having the opportunity to contribute to this very important debate, and I hope that some amendments will be forthcoming to this actual bill so that the agricultural sector of our country will not be neglected or taken advantage of, as it has in the past. We must recognize that we do have an obligation to produce food because we have millions of starving people in the world. The producer also has an obligation to the consumer, but we cannot and should not expect the producer to produce at a loss. Although I agree with the total over-view of this bill, there are many areas that can be improved upon in Committee.

**Mr. Arnold Malone (Battle River):** Madam Speaker, it is certainly a pleasure to be able to speak on an agricultural bill or agricultural issue, not because I believe that agriculture is an important industry but because I believe it is the most important industry.

In the 50,000 years that human beings have been on the planet earth, they have either eaten every day or been in search of food for every one of those days. Most of the industries that we talk about in the world we live in and that we give a tremendous importance to are the kinds of things that we have developed only within the last one or two human lifetimes.

The automobile industry is an invention of less than 100 years. Oil and gas have only come into prominence in the last 50 to 60 years, but food has been the substance of mankind for as long as mankind has existed.

I need not tell the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Whelan) the kinds of facts related to the tremendous importance of this industry on a world-wide basis. However, if I may, I will take some time to share with the House some of the important things that are happening in the world picture perhaps to show the inadequacies of this bill and how it simply will not fulfill the needs of the present day situation.

The fact is that 12,000 people died of starvation yesterday, 12,000 died of starvation today, and another 12,000 will die tomorrow. Four fifths of the world's population suffers from malnutrition. In the country of India human beings are dying of exposure at 57 degrees fahrenheit. That is a concept that is hard for us in Canada to comprehend when we have people living in the high Arctic at temperatures of 60 degrees below zero.

Another fact I think should bear importance in our argument here this evening is that on the continent of Africa 55 per cent of the human beings there are below or under the teenage bracket. What does that mean? When