

few words I would say it is to provide the framework within which Canadian consumers can be assured of a steady supply of wholesome food at reasonable prices, and to provide farmers and the whole agricultural industry with a reasonable income comparable with that of the rest of Canadian society.

Earlier today in the House it was pointed out that I said something about what vegetarians could live on. But let me tell you, Mr. Speaker, that at that same meeting a representative of a senior citizens group got up and said something very significant. Of course I was not writing it down, but it is on my tape machine.

**Mr. Stanfield:** Let's have the tape.

**Mr. Whelan:** The tape machine was sitting on top of the desk so everyone could see it. I do this so that I know what I said when I go home.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**An hon. Member:** Do you have doubts sometimes?

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Whelan:** I want to tell you what this representative of a senior citizens group said. She could have said it to you, Mr. Speaker, because I know you also would have listened. She said they had a meeting among their group that day and discussed many things, and they came to the conclusion that for their money food was the best bargain they get today in the city of Toronto. She went on to explain why and she did a very good job of it. I asked if she was a Liberal and people told me they did not know, but I thought that such a well informed person would be welcome in our party. She said that when she and her husband were married in 1920 butter was 86 cents a pound and her husband's wages were less than \$2 an hour. Butter today is less than 86 cents a pound and the average wage in Canada is \$3.50 an hour.

**An hon. Member:** And we still have a Liberal government.

**Mr. Whelan:** Total cash income for farmers is higher today than it has ever been in our entire history. Net farm income is higher today than it has ever been. And both continue to improve. This has been a goal of every government, of every political stripe, since the time of Confederation. But under this government's national policy we are making solid, concrete progress.

I might add that Canada has been doing a better job than any other nation in the world, and doing it without putting farmers on welfare and without turning agriculture into a public utility.

The number of profitable family farms has been increasing, not decreasing as many people think. In 1966 there were about 95,000 family farms in Canada selling more than \$10,000 worth of food. By 1971 the number increased to more than 113,000 family farms selling more than \$10,000 worth of food. I am positive that the figures for 1972 and 1973, when they are gathered, will show an even sharper increase in the number of profitable family farms. I think it would be safe to guess, in fact it would be a very

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conservative guess, that the figure would reach 175,000 family farms.

Canada's food production has kept on increasing even though the acreage that farmers work has held about steady, at around 170 million to 174 million acres for more than 30 years. The acreage has changed hardly at all but production has increased steadily.

When this government took over, farm exports were falling and we were losing markets all over the world. The government's national farm policies have turned that situation right around and our farm exports are increasing. Canada's record is one of the best in the world, much better than the United States even with its highly publicized grain sales of last year.

In 1960 Canada's agricultural exports were about \$90 million. In 1970 they were up to \$1,993 million. In 1972 they kept on going up to over \$2 billion, and there is no doubt that they will be higher again in 1973. That is performance under a policy that brings concrete results where it matters, in the farmer's pocketbook and in the active, healthy expansion of the related supply and processing industries.

In 1971 exports alone amounted to \$5,443 for every single farm in all of Canada—big farms, small farms, hobby farms, all kinds of farms. If you count only commercial farms the ones with sales of more than \$10,000 a year, exports amounted to more than \$17,600 per farm.

I picked the figures leading up to 1971 on purpose because they show what was happening before the world got into the present international monetary mess, before the price of food started to increase on world markets, and before there was a worldwide tightening of food supplies. They show that Canada's farmers, under the national policies of the government, were taking every advantage of their position as the world's most efficient, the world's most productive, the world's best farmers. Canada's farmers did not get to be the most efficient, the most productive, and the best in the world simply by chance. They did it with the help of our national farm policies.

The role of the federal government, as this government sees it, is to provide the services and the laws that Canadian agriculture and Canadian farmers need to do their job. The role of the federal government is not to do that which farmers and the agricultural industry can do for themselves and do very well. That should be left, as I have said, to the farmers themselves. The role of the federal government is to do those things that the agricultural industry and farmers cannot do for themselves.

This government has used its role to provide our farmers, and our agricultural industry, with the opportunity to earn a level of income that is at least equal to that of everybody else in our society and our economy. But now that we are making reasonable, decent gains in this direction, there are some hon. members who want to take that away again by unwarranted intervention to force food prices down again, to drive our agricultural industry into poverty and our farmers into the backwash of society once more.

Let me warn this House, Mr. Speaker, that today's farmer-businessman will not stand for it, that he will get out of farming and put his money elsewhere. Only those who cannot afford to move out will be left to carry the burden