

Speech from the Throne

Not only I but the Canadian Federation of Agriculture and the Canadian Cattlemen's Association have long felt that there is a finish being put on a lot of these animals, that is, first of all, very expensive and, secondly, almost completely wasted once they get to the packing houses. It is clear to those people who understand packing of beef that the last extra pound of fat that is put on at the end of the feeding season, in terms of conversion rates and cost per pound, is probably the most expensive pound of fat so far as the feeder is concerned. If this is cut off when the cattle goes to the packing house—and there are far too many fat heifers and steers that have to have a lot of fat cut off—surely we should use our intelligence and ingenuity to find a way of bringing these cattle to market so that the whole product is more acceptable to the consumer, with a resultant lower cost to the feeder. As far as one can see down the road through 1972 and beyond, the beef industry can look with some confidence and optimism to a market that will remain in a healthy economic condition.

I turn now to the subject of hogs and to say something about 1971 which was a very difficult year for the hog producers. Hogs were in overproduction in relation to market demand both in Canada and the United States, to the point where through most of 1971 many hog producers were selling their hogs at below their cost, not a desirable situation. A few days ago we announced that we would be paying a deficiency payment in 1971 of \$5 per hog up to 200 hogs with grade index 100 or higher.

Mr. Harkness: Would the minister permit a question?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Boulanger): Order. Is the hon. member rising to ask the minister a question?

Mr. Harkness: Yes, Mr. Speaker. I should like to ask the minister why the legal requirements of the Agricultural Stabilization Act in regard to obligatory payments are not being met on hogs that are below index 100.

Mr. Olson: Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member will know—because he was, I think, in the government at the time the original Agricultural Stabilization Act was written—the level of payment we are making is not 80 per cent but 88.5 per cent. He will also know that under the act and regulations it is not specifically stated that this payment shall be made on every hog regardless of quality. The reason for this is very simple. We know, and the hon. member certainly will agree—

Mr. Harkness: That is not what the act said when it was put through.

Mr. Olson: I am sure the hon. member will agree that what we are really talking about here is hog quality, when once you go below 100 you can go down quite a way, but 60.9 per cent of the hogs are grade 100 or better. When you go down below that you are really talking about a product that is not attractive to the market.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Boulanger): Order. I regret to inform the minister that his time has expired. Since I have already taken account of a few extra minutes taken to answer questions, I shall need the unanimous consent of the House to permit the minister to continue.

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

[Mr. Olson.]

Mr. Olson: No, Mr. Speaker, I am not going to transgress the good will of the House to go on longer. Obviously, I shall have to make another speech later in the Throne Speech debate. I have a number of very important matters to deal with that will probably take a further 20 or 25 minutes. These relate to the U.S. surtax, sheep and lambs, potatoes, eggs, and two bills, the Farm Credit Corporation bill and the exhibition loans bill. So while I thank the House for its courtesy, I find I shall need more time than an additional four or five minutes.

Mr. Benjamin: A point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Boulanger): Is the hon. member rising on a point of order?

Mr. Benjamin: Yes, Mr. Speaker. With your indulgence, and with extra time granted the minister by the House, I wonder whether he would answer one more question.

Mr. Olson: I am perfectly willing, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Benjamin: Would the minister mind completing the answer to the question I asked him earlier? In view of the fact that he and I both agree that 800 carloads a day are now being unloaded in Vancouver with use of the same facilities that were available last November before the five-foot snowdrifts, would the minister explain how it is we could not unload 800 carloads a day last November and thus avoid the mess we got into in January?

Mr. Olson: The answer is very simple, Mr. Speaker. Eight hundred carloads a day on a sustainable basis is almost unheard of in Vancouver. We are improving day by day as a result of the changes made in the operations of the Canadian Wheat Board, the grain commissioners, and so on, and I could spend 30 minutes going into great detail about these improvements and the effect they have had. However, I think it is fair to point out to the hon. member that the figure continues to rise. I do not know why on certain days in November they were unable to unload 800 carloads, but I do know that in view of what happened 6, 8 or 12 months ago they could get nowhere near that figure previously.

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Mr. W. C. Scott (Victoria-Haliburton): Mr. Speaker, at the onset I should like to congratulate the mover and seconder of the Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne, although I myself was disappointed with the Speech from the Throne. I believe it was just window-dressing. I imagine most members of the House of Commons spent their Christmas recess as I did, trying to iron out the problems of the Unemployment Insurance Commission. Therefore, at this time I propose to speak at some length on the Unemployment Insurance Commission.

When we returned here after the recess, members of the opposition repeatedly tried to have the House adjourned in order to deal with the deplorable situation in respect of the unemployed. However, this was to no avail. It is my opinion that the government did not want to face up to the situation regarding the issuance of cheques by the commission. As you would recall, Mr. Speaker, last June I asked the minister in charge of the Unemployment Insurance Commission if he would discontinue the use of the