

The Address—Mr. Whelan

New York were \$1.01.6 and in Toronto they were 84.6 cents. In February they were \$1.00.3 in New York, and 85.3 cents in Toronto. In March they were 90.8 cents in New York, and 88 cents in Toronto. In April they were 80 cents in New York, and 84.8 cents in Toronto. In May they were 66.3 cents in New York, and 77.7 cents in Toronto. In June they were 66 cents in New York, and 81 cents in Toronto. In July they were 71 cents in New York, and 79.1 cents in Toronto. In August they were 79.4 cents in New York, and 78.7 cents in Toronto; and in September they were 85 cents to 89 cents in New York, and 80 cents to 81 cents in Toronto.

These figures show that more stability was provided to egg marketing in the months when the agency has been in operation than ever before. History will show that the buying power of people in Canada for eggs may have been higher in 1971, when farmers went broke because they were selling eggs below the cost of production.

How could some of the mistakes made by CEMA have been prevented? Steps are being taken now to ensure that these mistakes are not repeated. There are people who are not satisfied with investigating the mistakes and errors of CEMA. Instead, they want to destroy the concept of the orderly production and marketing of farm products. Some of the things that have been said about what I should do, and CEMA should do, put me in mind of the Texas hanging judge called Judge Roy Bean. Do you remember what he used to say, Mr. Speaker? He said, "We are going to give you a fair trial and then hang you". Some of the critics of CEMA do not want to go even that far. That is why I am so anxious for a public hearing to be held because I honestly feel, on the information I have, that the public will be satisfied when they know the true facts.

I want to remind people that egg producers have been trying since the 1930s to establish a national system of orderly production and marketing. I would remind them that the ten ministers of agriculture unanimously urged the federal government to set up national marketing agencies. Ontario even had a judicial inquiry under Judge Ross, who said he never saw anything so chaotic or unfair in his life and recommended that it be brought to order.

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I would remind them that every political party in Canada, federal and provincial, has supported the concept of orderly production and marketing. I would remind them of the situation that existed before the national marketing agency for eggs was established, and I would add that the same forces exist today. A collapse of the national marketing agency for eggs would probably lead immediately to cut-throat competition among provincial marketing boards for their own provincial markets plus a share of the market in other provinces.

I would remind the hon. members of this House of the situation that exists today in the United States, where there is no form of orderly production and marketing for eggs and poultry products. Broiler producers are going through the most drastic cutback in production in American history right now. Hatcheries have cut egg placement for broilers by 12 per cent, which means that production will be cut back by 23 million pounds per week.

Bankruptcies are hitting the egg and broiler producers across the United States. According to George Watts, president of the National Broiler Council in the United States, the situation is a catastrophe. Three major companies have already closed part of their plants because they do not have the money to keep operating. Mr. Ed Covell, Jr., of Easton, Maryland, has cut back his production by 15 per cent. That cutback amounts to a million birds. Another major outfit in Maryland has gone broke. Otis Esham, the owner, says it happened so fast he is not sure what went wrong.

That is the kind of choice we have here in Canada: we have the choice of an open market, without any form of orderly production and marketing. That choice would mean that egg prices, broiler prices and turkey prices would go right out of the roof in a few months' time. It would mean that the economy would have to pick up the bills for the bankruptcies. It would mean that eventually the economy would have to pay the price to build brand new barns and brand new farms to replace the ones that end up in bankruptcy today. And who, I ask you, would benefit from that type of chaos? Nobody. Certainly not the farmers. Certainly not the consumers. Certainly not the economy of the country. That is why so much effort has gone into setting up a national marketing plan for eggs and turkeys and broilers here in Canada. And that is why a properly run marketing plan can, and should, benefit everyone in our economy, not just the producer and not just the consumer.

Mr. Speaker, I have a document here which was prepared by a very efficient person in my department before I became minister. It has been mailed to every hon. member, and I suggest they read it because it tells what a marketing board is supposed to do and explains it in a very good fashion. It was prepared by a Mr. Thomas A. Bennett. The document was mailed on Friday or Monday. I believe our efforts today should not be directed toward weakening or destroying national marketing agencies and plans, but toward improving their operations, and I am confident that the members of this House will come to the same conclusion when they complete their inquiry into the egg industry.

Some of the critics of CEMA have said there should be no production controls. Others have said there should be no marketing controls. Some have said that producers should not try to recover their full costs of production from the marketplace. But these criticisms strike at the very heart and principle of an orderly production and marketing plan for the egg industry. Without some form of production control, without some form of marketing control or some method to achieve a return that will over the long term at least cover the costs of production, we simply cannot have orderly production and marketing.

History will show that over the years egg prices have been stable compared with other food products. Some critics have said CEMA amounts to a monopoly in the market. But what is their definition of a monopoly? I find it hard to believe that we can have a monopoly when it involves more than 15,000 producers. I find it hard to believe that we can have a monopoly that excludes control over imports, excludes production from tens of thousands of small flocks, and excludes control over alternative