

Meat Import Act

the level of prices high for bread wheat, feed grains such as barley, and corn in other parts of the country.

This competitive rise in demand for grain products around the world, for which we are very skilled in finding markets, has an immediate effect upon the livestock industry. It takes so much grain to feed an animal in order to obtain a pound of meat that a farmer finds it more profitable to move into the growing grain activity. In the long run he knows this will be bad for him, but he can only take low prices for so many years before folding up. The question is, how can we, as parliamentarians in our limited way, do something useful?

At least on two different occasions it has been said in the House that the attack should not be against our allies, in an economic sense, such as the United States, Australia or New Zealand. The attack must be with regard to something which is missing that will provide permanent, long-term relief from the general problem or malaise of low beef prices. I am talking about how we market beef.

The great curse of the cattle industry in western Canada, every since I have known anything about it, which has been a long time, has been that livestock producers have never seriously gone outside Canada to look for any long-term markets. They have sat there, feeding grain to their cattle, sending their cattle to packing plants, and letting the packing plants do their marketing. Packing plants have a territorial area beyond which they do not go. So, the producers are faced with packing plant marketing area empires which hold them completely imprisoned.

The fault does not only lie with the government, it primarily lies with livestock producers who yell for help and do not realize that they must do the same thing grain farmers did, namely, get off their horses or jeeps for awhile and go out and do a little selling. Individuals have done it, but let me tell the House, with some feeling, that in the last number of years I have had the opportunity to talk about matters affecting meat consumption in Muslim—certainly I have not talked about them in Hindu countries—and in Buddhist countries. There is a tremendous demand for good grade meat. In hotels in Saudi Arabia, one pays \$125 per night for a room into which one would not put a high quality cow. If one goes to the dining-room, one is served meat from a cow which was wandering over the hills in Turkey or Kenya for four years in a hot climate. The cattlemen of those countries have attempted to get enough meat on its bones to produce enough to sell. One is then faced with paying a high price for that beef.

We should realize that within 12 hours beef from western Canada can be put into the three main marketing areas of Saudi Arabia; in fact that meat could be on tables there in less than 24 hours. Why do we not do it? The answer is that it is a Muslim country and the church has a great deal of authority over certain matters. It is the same situation that existed when the Anglican Church used to have a great deal of authority over the matter of meat. Every Friday was fish day. This was their way of helping to stabilize the fish market over 500 years ago. The rule in Muslim countries is that one must consume meat the day it is killed. It is pretty hard to sell the notion to a

mullah of the Muslim church that when we fly over the pole, we get rid of a lot of time zones and we can place live meat before him, or meat in vacuum-packed form within 24 hours. That is the state of decision making now. It should not deter us because if they want the product live we will put it there live, within 24 hours.

● (1530)

There are airlines in Iceland, Great Britain, Sri Lanka, and all over the world which fly empty half the year because of cycles in air travel. These big airlines are just as happy to carry live cattle or vacuum packed meat as they are to carry human beings because the price is right. You can take a pound of meat produced in Saskatchewan or Alberta and deliver it any place in the world for a dollar a pound. When you are paying wholesale prices of \$4 to \$5 a pound I suggest the transportation cost is a reasonable fraction.

Without going into all the details I am suggesting that whether you are dealing with the rich areas of Singapore, Hong Kong, Tokyo or any large population which can absorb substantial quantities of meat—and they are very anxious to receive good meat—this can be done.

I do not think this should be only the responsibility of the government. The farmers under the Canagrex proposal should take some responsibility. Frankly, I would use it as an organization with the beef industry and tell them to pick out their own people to go around to the various markets and set the system up. That would be more harmonious with the basic philosophy of the cattlemen as opposed to some completely civil service oriented group which goes around and performs this function.

I think there have to be people in this system who sell for themselves. That is what I am talking about; the nature of the beast. He does not like to be driven but I suspect he can be led by the nose if there are dollars at the end of the trail. The minister who has a great persuasive power would be better advised to take this approach with the beef farmers than to continue talking about this silly supply management.

Believe me, this philosophy came into this country from Europe about 30 years ago. It brainwashed all the economists in Canada and the United States. You will not be able to sell that type of civil service run, operated and decision-making to beef farmers. They will just not have it. It is a lynching proposal. The sooner the minister drops it the sooner the action will happen. Some 90 per cent of the beef farmers in the east and west will not accept supply management. They will take a look at their neighbouring industries, the dairy, poultry and the struggling hog producers and will decide to take their medicine their own way. If you allow them to get off their horses, or whatever it is they get off, and get into this selling operation, they will do well at it. They are born horse traders and traders.

I want to hurry on because I realize there are other members who wish to speak. In this legislation we have been wise because we have not gone in for a completely restricted market. The American market is a big asset to us. We have