

Business of Supply

with these programs. The hon. member for Kamloops-Cariboo pointed out earlier that when there was a vote in British Columbia, well over two-thirds of the cattlemen there voted in favour of participation in the program which the province of British Columbia had put forward. There has since been a change in government there, and the present provincial minister of agriculture recently wrote me a letter saying that B.C. intends to continue this program of income insurance for the beef cattle people and the cow-calf producers, but he wants to know when there will be a federal program to participate in.

Moving on to Alberta, 50 per cent of the beef cattle produced in Canada is produced there. The minister of agriculture in Alberta says he wants this kind of program. He wants some kind of national program. Moving on to Saskatchewan, the minister and the premier in Saskatchewan, as well as the premier of Alberta, say that there should be a national program.

The Canadian Federation of Agriculture recently came before the cabinet, and the president of Saskatchewan Federation of Agriculture was there. He said he wants this program and that this was endorsed by 1,600 people at the rural municipalities annual meeting in Saskatchewan, with not one dissenting vote. I asked him whether there was someone there from the Saskatchewan Stockgrowers or from the Canadian Cattlemen's Association who voted against it, and he said there was not a dissenting vote. I repeated, "Was there any member?" He said that he was the president of the Saskatchewan Federation of Agriculture and a member of the Saskatchewan Stockgrowers' Association, but that they do not speak for all the cattlemen in Saskatchewan or for all the cattlemen in western Canada. So the issue is becoming confusing, and it is becoming more difficult for me.

● (2040)

The hon. member talked about the North American market for beef as if it were the only one in the world. Let me tell him that I returned from a meeting at which representatives of the United States, Mexico, Canada, Central American, Caribbean and Latin American countries tried to develop a program for aiding Latin American countries. There were to be horizontal working agreements between some of the developing countries of the area and the have countries were to help the have-nots.

The hon. member for Medicine Hat thinks that we should consider solely the North American market. Perhaps we should, in the case of live cattle. I ask the hon. member to look at it this way: the World Bank and North American banks lent Uruguay over \$80 million to help that country build a big processing and cold storage plant; and the bottom dropped out of the beef market. Beef slumped. Next consider Panama, Guatemala, and other countries of that region. The United States encouraged them to go into beef production. What happened to them? All their producers are disillusioned and dissatisfied, because now they are broke. They borrowed money from the World Bank, from the Latin American banks, the International Development Bank, and from other banks, in order to enter the cattle business; and now they are broke. And what help do those countries now seek of us? They want us to help eradicate foot and mouth disease. Why? So that they can ship beef to developing countries. Therefore, if the hon.

[Mr. Whelan.]

member thinks that we are concerned solely about the North American market, he is mistaken.

Let me refer the hon. member to what happened in the Australian market. If I am wrong I hope the hon. member will correct me, but I think he said that the Australians were shipping beef here for 15 cents a pound less than they are selling it in the U.S.A. They may have done that at one time; we made representations to them. We do not know why they did it. We believe it was done during a time when Australia was using incentives for exporters to find markets, they were required to export to a third market before they could earn the right to ship to the U.S.A. Under that incentive program, if producers shipped so many pounds to certain other countries they were given a certain beef quota for the United States. Therefore they shipped to Canada at 15 cents below what they were charging in the United States.

Mr. Hargrave: They still do it.

Mr. Whelan: They are not supposed to be doing it. They are breaking the agreement if they are. If they are, they certainly are not living up to their agreement as Commonwealth traders and fellow-Commonwealth trading partners, as far as I am concerned. We shall tell them that. But I have seen no facts to substantiate the hon. member's claim.

This incentive program led to lower prices for Australian beef in Canada than the United States. Australia removed Canada as a country in which credit could be earned for exports to the U.S.A., and prices are moving to a normal differential between the U.S.A. and Canada as far as we are concerned.

I am trying to answer questions as quickly as I can. I believe the hon. member suggested that we have accepted a reduced figure for meat exports to the United States. We have not accepted any figure. There are no quotas, although I saw quotas alluded to in two press reports. There are no quotas on poundage as between Canada and the United States. I repeat, there are no quotas this year. We will be exchanging estimates of trade in meat between the two countries and will watch developments during the coming year. If they get out of balance, our officials are to meet. That is the kind of agreement we entered into. No figures at all were used in it. I saw this alluded to twice in the press and saw it on the television media. I immediately checked with my officials and said, "We agreed to no figures." They said, "No, and we don't know where the media people got them."

The hon. member referred to the December press release and implied that we had something akin to a meat import law. My reference was to maintaining meat imports under a general meat import licence, and the Export and Import Permits Act—

The Acting Chairman (Mr. Béchard): Order, please. I must interrupt the minister—

Mr. Whelan: I have finished, Sir.

The Acting Chairman (Mr. Béchard):—whose time has expired.

Mr. Whelan: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order, I wonder if I might answer one more question.