

Slaughter of Calves

flood of overfat cattle which U.S. farmers had kept off the market in protest against their own country's price freeze, and which they then flooded their market with.

In January of this year, the United States court of appeals ruled against the ban on DES, and Canada required that all beef entering Canada be certified free of the growth hormone. In March the government moved to assist the beef industry and the consumer by applying a seven cents subsidy. During the spring and summer that subsidy program was phased out in favour of a beef stabilization program that ensures the beef producer an adequate floor price for his product. Every provincial program is based on the federal stabilization program for beef. We do have a national stabilization plan which is something that no other nation has, Mr. Speaker.

● (2040)

At the same time we applied import quotas made necessary by the fact that there is a world surplus of beef. We do not want this beef to ruin our Canadian industry, or to benefit from our stabilization program.

In addition to what the federal government has done, most of the provinces have instituted programs to help their producers deal with the particular problems they face. Not all of the programs are the same. Alberta, which is not a very poor province, has funded up to \$40 million with the objective of improving the cash flow to small farmers hit by low calf prices. This program is available to Alberta farmers with cow herds owned prior to August, 1974.

An hon. Member: Tell us about federal plans; never mind the provinces.

Mr. Whelan: I have heard what the hon. member has said about the farmers in Alberta from time to time, but I will not repeat them in the House tonight. The Alberta plan is eligible to farmers with cow herds owned prior to August, 1974. It provides a cash advance of \$75 per head up to a maximum of \$6,000 per farmer, and up to 80 per cent of the individual farmer's calf crop on the date of application. These cash advances are to be interest free for one year.

Under this plan the unpaid balance at the end of one year is to carry a prime rate of interest plus a small carrying charge. This amounts to an average of more than \$1,200 to these farmers to assist them over the winter.

I might say that most of the beef producers in Saskatchewan and in Alberta have condemned these plans as something that is not what they need. Most of their associations have recommended that the farmers do not participate in these plans, but I am sure there will be some who will be participating. The program in Saskatchewan is practically the same as the one in Alberta, so I will now move to the plan in Manitoba. This is a different kind of a program. If I were allowed I would ask the consent of the House to have these program statistics printed as an appendix to today's *Hansard*.

An hon. Member: No.

An hon. Member: You have told us what you have done, now tell us what you are going to do.

[Mr. Whelan.]

Mr. Stanfield: Tell us how you won the election single handed.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Whelan: Alberta and Saskatchewan have made a move to assist farmers who have been hit with low calf prices, by providing a cash advance of \$75 per head.

Manitoba has adopted a program to make cash available to farmers who wish to feed their own stocker calves and have the feed and facilities to do so. They have applied a little bit of socialism by adopting a stocker agreement not to exceed 200 head, or \$50,000 per farmer. This plan provides for an insurance fee of 2½ per cent of the stock payable by the farmer to cover 75 per cent of the cost of losses. The program is to be interest free on up to 50 calves for one year, and loans made one year ago are extended.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. It was agreed earlier this day by unanimous consent that the first round of speakers be limited to 20 minutes, and that each speech after that be limited to 15 minutes. The point I think significant in the order of the House at this moment is that no one shall seek or be given extra time, and that the debate be concluded by midnight. Accordingly I must interrupt the minister and go on to the next speaker.

Mr. Bert Hargrave (Medicine Hat): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased and privileged as a cattleman to take part in this debate tonight. This is an emergency debate of concern to the Canadian cattle industry, and the first to result from a television program such as the one last night, repeated again this morning. Let me suggest that this incident has finally dramatized in a very spectacular way the current very serious crisis on the cow-calf side of Canada's cattle industry.

I am sure all hon. members regret having to see such a demonstration as we saw in living colour last night. However, as a lifetime cattleman I can fully appreciate the frustrations and despair behind that tragic action.

Our Canadian cattle industry has, and is still involved in a series of developments that have almost destroyed our faith and confidence in ourselves as cattlemen and in our total industry. No responsible cattle organization in Canada would properly condone this approach, yet as a cattleman I can understand this very extreme action. Suffice it to say that this emergency debate tonight would not have developed without that incident.

First of all let me give some background information about our Canadian cattle industry. This industry has had plenty of rough times before this crisis. I am old enough to remember my father selling two and three-year old grass steers for two cents to three cents a pound, fat dry cows at the same price, with canner cows going for three-quarters of a cent per pound. That took place back in the 1930's.

In 1948 I attended a Western Stock Growers Association meeting in Lethbridge when the late James Gardiner, the then Minister of Agriculture, was invited and was under pressure to lift the U.S. embargo which prevented our cattle from going south to the U.S.A. The Alberta cattlemen were so sincere and dedicated to this concept that they threatened to secede from Canada and join the United States if the minister did not agree to their request.