

Industry" in December of 1976. In announcing the Inquiry, Senator Hazen Argue, Chairman of the Committee, made the following statement.

The Standing Senate Committee on Agriculture considers the continuing instability of the beef industry a threat to the survival of that industry. The financial viability of beef producers has been severely tested by fluctuations in input costs, market prices and government policies. Over the past four years the beef industry has suffered one crisis after another. Governments, federal and provincial, have each time reacted to the immediate problem without reference to a long-term stabilization program. We believe that this short-sighted and crisis-oriented approach by governments and producers must be ended.

The Standing Senate Committee on Agriculture is composed of twenty Senators with a background in agricultural policy or a strong interest in agricultural issues. A major responsibility of the Committee is to study and evaluate agricultural legislation, passed in the House of Commons, and make recommendations on such legislation to the Senate. The Committee has also been empowered by the Senate "to examine from time to time any aspect of the Agricultural industry of Canada." In establishing its inquiry into the beef industry the Committee adopted the following terms of reference:

Moved by the Honourable Senator MacDonald and seconded by the Honourable Senator McGrand

That, with the knowledge that a steady supply of beef at reasonable prices is in the interest of both producers and consumers, and that the continuing depressed prices and market disruptions have so drastically affected the incomes of producers as to threaten the supply of beef and the viability of the industry with subsequent adverse effects on both producers and consumers, the Senate Standing Committee on Agriculture inquire into the desirability of long-term stabilization in the Canadian beef industry, and particularly into:

- (a) the role of producers and governments in the establishment of stability;
- (b) the alternatives available for stabilizing the beef industry;
- (c) the effects of Canada's trade laws on the achievement of stability in the industry, and
- (d) the possibility of expanding international trade in Canadian beef to increase stability.

In the course of its Inquiry, the Committee has heard the views of producers and their organizations, ministers of agriculture, government officials, academics and consumers.¹ It is quite evident from these presentations to the Committee that beef producers and their organizations are agreed that stability in the Canadian beef industry is a desirable objective. However, it was clear from the beginning of the inquiry that there is no clear agreement on a solution to the problems besetting the industry.

¹Appendix A, page 75.