

The Address—Mr. Whelan

that you can use. It is packed in five-pound tin cans, with nitrogen, and sealed. If the can is pierced, the product deteriorates quite rapidly. You can see the difference in price between the milk powder, which costs 55 cents a pound, and egg powder which is \$1.75 a pound. Skim milk powder is shipped in 50-pound bags and the only time you have to worry about it is in times of high humidity, because it has a tendency to sweat inside the bag.

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The purpose of our program is to assist other countries to become more productive. If anyone thinks that those countries want us to give food away, let me tell them that this is not so. You can bet your bottom dollar that it is not so. They themselves want to be sure that their people become more productive. Our product is sent to their country at a reasonable price; it is not just thrown away. It is only given away in cases of disaster. Our food aid program is excellent.

We show other countries how to produce their food, we educate them, and so on. Our programs are second to none in the world, mainly because of the productiveness of our farmers. That is why we have been able to play such a large part in providing food aid in the world. Let no one tell Canada, a small country of less than 23 million people, that we have to take a back seat to anyone. The only country which surpasses us in direct food aid is the United States of America.

Shortly we will be announcing some new appointments to the National Farm Products Marketing Council.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Whelan: These will include a consumer representative, a labour-oriented representative, and a businessman. We want people of high integrity, of fairness and understanding. I have no fear of persons of this calibre on this board because I am sure they will recognize what we are trying to do. I do not care who we have on this board, because any reasonable person will understand our aim and aid the competent members who are now on the board. This will make the operation of the National Farm Products Marketing Council better than it has been. Let me point out that it is a very new board; it was established only a few short months before I became Minister of Agriculture. I hope it will be recognized that we in agriculture have taken the lead and that we may expect representatives of the agricultural community to be appointed as members of other boards and agencies, such as the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, the Canadian Transport Commission, the CNR and Air Canada.

An hon. Member: Why not?

Mr. Whelan: This is nothing new to agriculture in Canada. We have accepted scientific change and automation to a greater extent than any other segment of our society. No other segment of society has accepted it as well as we have. That is why so few of us in agriculture produce so much. When I, as Minister of Agriculture, say that I am proud of Canadian farmers, I mean that. We are the envy of nearly every other nation.

[Mr. Whelan.]

The minister of food production in China pointed out to me how lucky we Canadians are, being a nation of 23 million producing so much food that we can sell to China, a nation of 800 million people. He remarked to me that in our country only about 6¼ per cent of our population is occupied in food production, whereas in China nearly 80 per cent of their population of 800 million is in food production. He told me that our country is the most amazing country and our farmers a most amazing group of people. I agree with him; they are.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Whelan: For the past few weeks the news media have been full of editorials, stories and opinion columns about egg marketing. Many of the stories have been accurate but only a few of them have been complete and have told the whole story. Many of them are based on partial information and recommend action that would put our egg industry back in a state of total confusion and chaos. This is one of the prime reasons I believe there should be a full and complete investigation of the egg marketing situation, which is something I have said both inside and outside the House. I want all the facts to come out and all the truth to be told, not just bits and pieces here and there. The consumers of Canada want to know the full truth, and so do the egg producers. I have full confidence in the ability of members of the House to investigate the facts and to conduct a fair and complete inquiry.

I have said that administrative mistakes have been made by CEMA. That should surprise no one, because the agency itself has admitted that mistakes have been made. However, some other things have been said that warrant correction. I should like to answer some direct criticisms from Canadians who have written to me. The federal government has not made loans to CEMA, as was stated in many reports. Many news reports to that effect are false. There have been no subsidies and no grants other than the \$100,000 provided as a start-up for any new national marketing agency, and there have been no hidden financial arrangements between the federal government and CEMA. The federal government is not managing CEMA; CEMA has managed on its own, just as has any other company set up under federal legislation.

CEMA has gained certain rights under that legislation. It must also meet certain obligations and carry out certain duties. They are clearly spelled out in the national marketing plan recommended to the federal government only after the National Farm Products Marketing Council held full and complete public hearings across the nation, and only after the council was able to satisfy itself and the federal government that a clear majority of producers favoured that plan. CEMA has admitted mistakes and has taken action to make sure that those mistakes are not repeated. As Minister of Agriculture, I was just as upset by the loss of eggs as anyone else, but I am willing to give CEMA a chance to prove itself, always keeping in mind that the agency must stay within the terms of their plan as set down in the law.

Statements have been made that eggs could be bought much cheaper in Canada if we could follow what is done in the United States. We can look at the prices between January and September 10th. In January of 1974, eggs in