

Anti-Inflation Act

return for their investment. This is scrutinized each and every week, and that is the consumer protection.

I announced this early in July, and I did so to prevent any agency under federal legislation from gouging consumers or raising prices indiscriminately.

What I am saying is that national marketing agencies are already living under the guidelines of this legislation and, in fact, they have been for months. Members of the opposition should be aware that any individual group could have appealed egg prices set by CEMA, or turkey prices set by the turkey marketing agency, the two boards that are under my jurisdiction. However, nobody did. Not one of the headline grabbers and not one of the members of the opposition who so constantly ridiculed those agencies made an appeal.

I think it is time to be honest with the farmers. They deserve to know that this government and this anti-inflation program are not making them the target of abuse. The only abuse comes from the unfounded allegations that stem from press-hungry members of the opposition and other people who have made no real investigation of how a marketing board works.

I heard one of these statements on CBC this morning in relation to a report made by the Food Prices Review Board yesterday. All I can say is that if egg farmers got paid at the same rate as that individual does for his five-minute contribution on CBC, which is about \$600 an hour, you could not afford to buy an egg. Eggs at the present time are selling at the same price they were selling in 1951. I would ask anybody in this House, or any economist anywhere, to tell me what in the world you could buy for the same price today that you paid in 1951. The cheapest and best source of protein in all of Canada today is high quality eggs being produced by some of the most efficient producers of any commodity in this whole country.

Let us go one step further. Any new commodity group wishing to set up a national agency will be forced to justify its prices in the same way. It cannot set up a new agency unless it holds public hearings, and anyone can appear before that forum and state his feelings. The board then considers them and advises the Minister of Agriculture, who in turn advises the government whether there should be a new marketing board.

Strangely enough, producers across Canada are eager to justify the prices of their products and to justify them publicly through marketing boards. I remind you as well that the formula used to set prices for the national egg and turkey agencies was developed by independent experts, the best that could be found in Canada. There is nothing suspicious or inflationary built into the cost structure that presently exists in respect of these commodities, and that cost structure is made public.

The Prices Review Board's biased report on broilers refers to recent years after the provincial marketing boards saved the chicken farmers from oblivion. Why did they not go back to the 1960's when farmers borrowed heavily and invested in buildings and equipment to start in broiler production and were wiped out when the bottom dropped out of that market? You can find broiler houses all over Ontario and other parts of Canada that are as empty as can be because that happened in the 1960's, and

these producers have never been able to recoup their losses. Who do members of the opposition think paid for those losses if it was not the producers?

Why did they not investigate and relate the mortgage foreclosures and the desperate measures that broiler farmers had to take until they organized provincial broiler marketing boards in order to stay alive?

There is one statement often repeated by the Prices Review Board that is not founded on fact. Producer marketing boards, it is suggested, restrict production. The fact is that they do not restrict production at all. This is one statement that is completely unfounded on fact. It has been said that they restrict production in order to raise prices. They plan production for plenty of supply, and stabilize prices, and that is the principle of a good marketing board. I have not had time to study the report thoroughly, but the abbreviated report I received from my officials does not point out that the imports of broilers from the United States for this year have experienced a 75 per cent increase in total live and eviscerated birds. There is no border control on them whatsoever. So you can see they do not have a closed market or a monopoly. That is the most farfetched statement I have ever read at any time.

As I have said, these are provincial boards and have not become national marketing boards. They did go through the procedure of holding public hearings but I refused to let them go any further until I was satisfied with the suggestion that their boards should operate under what would really be a national concept. At no time and in no way would I become involved in that.

At no time has there been a shortage of products. In all instances products controlled by marketing boards have more than equalled consumer demand. They have actually produced for a surplus.

The report on broilers from the Prices Review Board states that "it should be possible surely to develop an alternative to supply management." Producers have been seeking methods for 50 years and I challenge the board to come up with another system which they can guarantee to work, instead of dodging their responsibilities.

While they are at it why do they not tell the manufacturers and the processors to ignore supply management? Why do they not tell the bakers to keep producing bread after the market is supplied? Perhaps they should tell the lumber mills not to close, tell the food manufacturers to continue producing, and tell the paper mills and automobile factories not to shut down when supply management warns them to curtail production. Why not have warehouses full of corn flakes? Think how wonderful it would be if newspapers would keep their presses running and sell newspapers at half price to those who cannot afford to pay full price, and here I think of those senior citizens in nursing homes, hospitals, etc. Think of the many places where they could supply these products to the people. This is all food for thought.

We met auto parts manufacturing people last night in this very building. I asked them if they produced parts without an order from some auto manufacturing company. They said: "Of course not. Do you think we are crazy? We do not turn a wheel unless we have an order because we