

Cost of Living

were going to announce on their arrival. It increases or decreases as it goes along.

But what is the policy? For approximately the 10 per cent of Canadian wheat production going into the domestic market they will guarantee a price of \$3.25 a bushel. In order for the farmer to get this, he must sacrifice part of the price presently being offered on the international market. Nothing is said about the total production of western Canada. If the farmer produces to his maximum, will he be guaranteed \$1.75, \$2, \$2.25 of any other figure on the total production he may produce for the international and national market? No. This government has given no clear signal to the farmer that they want him to produce the maximum wheat, barley, hogs or cattle for the Canadian consumer. They are dodging and hedging. If the government wanted to serve the Canadian consumer, they would give a clear signal for all-out production.

A ceiling has been imposed on Durum. The farmer has been told he will be paid a certain figure. He has been told he will have to take so much less than the price for Durum on the international markets. The minister said today this was not as much as I had said, that it was only a couple of dollars. It does not matter: That is only a matter of degree; the principle is the same. The government wants to chisel the farmer at one end and the consumer at the other. What conversations have they had with those who produced and processed Durum wheat and its chief product which is Pasta? Unless some commitment is made by manufacturers and processors, the ceiling on the price of Durum is nothing more or less than a gift to those who process it.

In my city of Saskatoon the price of pizza has increased. You will find prices have gone up. What action has been taken to see they are reduced? Precious little. How much of the milk subsidy will find its way into the hands of the farmer and of the consumer, and how much will find its way into the hands of the processor? This rests with the provincial governments. It will depend on how effectively they can deal with those who process milk.

● (2010)

I want to take some of my scarce time to quote from what was said on a CBC program by the United States Secretary of Agriculture. I do so for the benefit of those who sit to my right. When he came to Ottawa on August 2 to confer with officials of the Canadian government, Mr. Butz said:

I think it was a mistake in the first place to impose ceilings on meat prices. I think our people in the United States have learned a very important economic lesson, and I hope people in Canada have learned the same lesson, that is, in a biological industry you don't get more by paying less.

That is what we did. We tried to get more by paying less, and the net result was that we liquidated our stocks of chickens and were slaughtering pregnant sows. The way to get food at more economical prices is to produce more and guarantee the farmer against price reductions when he does produce greater quantities. That is the real answer if we want more food.

The Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Whelan) and the minister in charge of the Wheat Board have been saying that the price of food ought to be raised to the consumer; that it is about time. The minister in charge of the Wheat Board

[Mr. Gleave.]

says the government is sympathetic to those whose wages are low, but those earning higher wages can afford to pay more for the food they buy. They are separating Canadian citizens.

Mr. Speaker, if we want to do something for those at lower income levels, we should see that they are provided with food; that if they cannot afford to buy it they can get it anyway. The food stamp program in the United States makes us in Canada look as though we were a bunch of pikers. They do provide food for those whose incomes are low. They are trying to make sure that people in the United States do not suffer from malnutrition. It is a disgrace that here in Canada, with all the productive resources we have at our disposal, people should suffer from malnutrition. They do. And we do nothing about it except bring in programs which increase the price of food.

Mr. Grafftey: You voted for them.

An hon. Member: They were your suggestions, remember?

Mr. Gleave: All right. You will have a chance to speak when your time comes. Controls have been placed on Durum wheat, bread wheat. I note that neither the Minister of Agriculture nor the minister in charge of the Wheat Board is in his place tonight despite the fact that they raised this question earlier today. Why have they not placed ceilings on soybean prices, since they have placed a ceiling on the price of wheat? The increase in the price of soybeans has been much greater than the increase in the price of wheat. A year ago the price was \$3.39 a bushel. As of September 7 it was \$10 a bushel. And soybeans are one of the most important sources of protein we have. The government never concerned itself about the price of soybeans, yet the very farmers in western Canada whose wheat is subject to a ceiling are buying soybean meal for their chickens and hogs. No action has been taken to place a ceiling on the price of corn. The price a year ago was \$1.50. On September 7 it stood at \$2.45. No action has been taken to bring this basic cereal under control.

The government has put into place a feed grain marketing policy and the Wheat Board, which is following that policy, has stated it will no longer use the commodity markets in Winnipeg as a means of setting the price for barley. Officials of the commodity market say that in these circumstances the market will no longer be able to function. What, then, is to be the method of pricing flaxseed, rapeseed and rye? The government has a responsibility to ensure a viable marketing system. It is not discharging this responsibility because the minister in charge of the Wheat Board has failed to make a statement in the House outlining his policy and the way in which it will operate. In my opinion, the reason he has not made a statement is that he does not know what to say.

The present situation is such that I defy anybody to say with certainty whether the Wheat Board is still an independent body or whether it is being dictated to and run by the minister in charge of the Wheat Board and the grains group which sits behind him. It is a serious thing not to know what kind of pricing and marketing mechanism will be in effect. In terms of rapeseed and flax we could find ourselves in the position of contracting sales in