

Slaughter of Calves

as do grain handlers on the west coast, for example. I didn't hear the hon. member for Oshawa-Whitby get up then and condemn those men when they stopped the shipment of millions of tons of grain for food to the starving people of the world.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Whelan: I did not hear him, or his party, or any of them condemn the Great Lakes pilots, some of the highest paid people on the Great Lakes, when they stopped the shipping of grain through the Great Lakes, which is worse than stopping shipments of grain from the west coast because more grain moves through Thunder Bay than from the west coast. We shall never make up the delivery of those grains to the hungry people of the world. Did he condemn them? No, he didn't. Why? Because he knows where his bread is buttered. He was too cowardly to get up and condemn them at that stage.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Whelan: As I was saying, farmers do not have the same bargaining power as other people in this nation, and they probably never will. But who the hell has condemned me more than that party for my stand on behalf of the agricultural producers in this country? I ran against a member of that group over there in my constituency and, boy, oh boy, he certainly sounded different from that great fellow opposite who is going to support the farmers, with the innuendo about me that he spread among the workers in my constituency at that time. But the workers in my constituency didn't believe him at that time, and they don't believe them now either, as far as that goes. They are about as phoney as a three-dollar bill.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Whelan: The fact of the matter is that we have ten provinces with ten different agricultural programs.

I welcome the opportunity to take part in an emergency debate on the beef industry in Canada. I have had many discussions on this subject with the provincial people. I believe the hon. member would even suggest that we impose a national marketing board on the beef producers. I say the legislation is there. If the producers want a national marketing board they can bring it about in a democratic fashion. The machinery is there. But maybe the hon. member's party doesn't know anything about democracy.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Whelan: It is there for them to use. It is like a machine. It is there, and if they want to use it, it can do a job for them. There is no denying that. This government sponsored marketing boards for farmers if they want to use them. But marketing boards will not be forced upon them as long as I am Minister of Agriculture.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Whelan: We are all concerned about the price and quality of food Canadians eat. We all know that beef is one of the most important items in every housewife's shopping basket every week. I am deeply concerned over

[Mr. Whelan.]

the slaughter of calves in Quebec. My position is, and always has been, that I cannot sanction the destruction of food by anyone in any way.

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): Even eggs?

Mr. Whelan: Just stick to the facts, that is all. And make sure you act as you have been taught to act, as a good jurist.

On the other hand I sympathize with these farmers. They have been faced with rapidly rising prices for feed and all the other commodities they have to purchase. At the same time they have been hard hit by the loss of overseas markets for dairy calves. In the first six months of this year exports to Europe amounted to only 74,000, well down when compared with the first six months of last year. This situation has been brought about by the world surplus of cattle.

Last year, when the producers were exporting calves there were people who suggested we should ban those exports—that we should take this market away because it was a lucrative one. We did not do so. We let them keep that market. Now there is a surplus of beef practically all over the world. The situation has been brought on, as I say, by a surplus of cattle, and this is something Quebec farmers can do nothing about.

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I welcome the action taken by the government of Quebec and congratulate them for their quick response to offer assistance. I am not sure that all of us are fully aware of the importance of the livestock industry to this country, or aware of the serious problems that those in the industry face, particularly since inflation has been upsetting trading patterns in all commodities. Not all of these problems originate in Canada: we have to react to world situations, and I have outlined what we have done in this respect. In fact, most of the problems are international in origin. Nevertheless, we in Canada have done our utmost to assist the industry and to keep it on an even keel.

The statistics will show just how successful we have been in stabilizing the beef industry in spite of the enormous pressures and price fluctuations generated outside our borders. For example, let me first put the industry in proper perspective. Canadian farmers last year had total farm cash receipts of \$6.4 billion. Livestock accounted for \$3.6 billion, or 57 per cent of total farm income in Canada. Livestock are not only important to the agricultural industry of this country but to the manufacturing industry as well. The meat processing industry in Canada has annual sales of over \$2.5 billion, which makes it the third largest manufacturing industry in the country. It employs more than 31,000 people, pays out \$265 million each year in wages and contributes more than \$20 million in income taxes. The hon. student from Oshawa—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Whelan:—who I was told by a hard working friend of mine has never worked a day in his life, would learn a little about beef farming if he spent some time on a beef