

*Price Control*

**Mr. Cyr:** Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the hon. member whether he knows that the fishermen in the Atlantic provinces were receiving 5 cents a pound for cod last spring and that they were receiving 15 cents a pound at the end of November, 1973? In view of that, is the hon. member favourable to a price freeze of 10 cents per pound to the fishermen for cod in the Atlantic area this year?

**Mr. McGrath:** Mr. Speaker, I am glad the hon. member has asked me that question as it gives me the opportunity of saying that I agree with him that the price of fish to fishermen has gone up to 15 cents a pound, but the hon. member knows full well that the price to the processor has gone from 29 cents a pound to 70 cents a pound on the United States market. Who is getting a rakeoff in the fishing industry? Obviously, it is not the fishermen off the Gaspé coast and in the four Atlantic provinces who are receiving that increase, yet they are suffering as a result of the highest cost of living in the whole country.

**Mr. Baldwin:** Aren't you sorry you asked the question?

**Mr. Alexander:** Ask another one.

[Translation]

**Mr. De Bané:** Mr. Speaker, would the hon. member permit me a question?

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel):** Order, please. I would also point out to the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mr. De Bané) that the time allotted to the hon. member for St. John's East (Mr. McGrath) has expired. If he wishes to ask a question, he too will have to get the unanimous consent of the House.

[English]

The hon. member for Matane (Mr. De Bané) wishes to ask a question. He can only do so with unanimous consent. Does the House give unanimous consent?

**Some hon. Members:** Agreed.

**Mr. De Bané:** Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask the hon. member for St. John's East (Mr. McGrath) how he reconciles his last statement that the processors are making great profit with the statement last week by the Leader of the Opposition in the Senate, Senator Flynn, who said that the government should endeavour to make sure that companies make still more profit? Just who is speaking on behalf of the opposition party?

**Mr. McGrath:** Mr. Speaker, obviously the hon. member did not read closely the remarks of Senator Flynn, as he was talking about companies in general. Even Senator Flynn and the hon. gentleman would concede that corporations involved in food processing in this country have enjoyed considerable increases in profits, and this applies particularly to the fish processors in the Atlantic provinces which have been making a lot of money on the U.S. market. All I can say to the hon. member, as I said to the hon. member for Gaspé (Mr. Cyr), is that this money is not going to the fishermen.

[The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel).]

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

## AGRICULTURE

## ANNOUNCEMENT OF SUBSIDY PROGRAM FOR BEEF PRODUCERS

**Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture):** Mr. Speaker, as I indicated this morning, I should now like to request the unanimous consent of the House to revert to motions for the purpose of making an announcement regarding assistance to beef producers.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel):** The House has heard the request of the hon. minister. Does it give unanimous consent to revert to motions for the purpose of making a statement.

**Some hon. Members:** Agreed.

**Mr. Whelan:** Mr. Speaker, as hon. members are aware, Canadian cattlemen are facing a very difficult situation at the present time. Very simply, the problem is this: They have bought feeder cattle at very high prices, paid high prices for grain and other necessary inputs, and then have seen in the last few weeks a flood of United States cattle coming in, depressing the market and lowering their returns.

At current prices, cattle feeders are losing from \$50 to \$100 a head on each animal marketed. Canadian cattlemen need to be assisted in this difficult period if we are to have a viable beef industry in this country.

This government recognizes the importance of a viable agricultural industry to the country as a whole. In the throne speech it was made clear that a strong agriculture industry will assure consumers of a continuous supply of high quality food at reasonable prices. To maintain a strong agriculture industry, farmers must be assured of fair returns, returns which equate to the cost of production, plus a reasonable margin for labour and invested capital.

I am therefore announcing a program to assist Canadian beef producers. The federal government will pay a premium of 7 cents per pound live weight on all Canadian cattle for Canadian consumption, grading A1 or A2, retroactive to March 4. The 7-cent premium will also be paid on all A3 cattle slaughtered between March 18 and April 13 inclusive, and on all A4 cattle slaughtered between March 18 and April 6 inclusive.

Premium payments will be made to producers by processors who will then be reimbursed by the federal government. Retroactive payments will be made directly to producers by the Agricultural Stabilization Board on receipt of claims from producers.

This premium program is being instituted to meet four objectives: One, to assure top quality beef for the consumer; two, to prevent the price of beef to the consumer from rising; three, to tide cattlemen over a disastrous period where many would be bankrupted in the squeeze between higher cost of production and lower returns from the market; and four, to ensure a continuing supply of beef to the Canadian consumer, both now and in the future.