

date has been that this particular committee has not been activated in any meaningful way.

● (2110)

I believe that all recommendations in this report of the special committee on egg marketing are important. My selection of four of these recommendations for purposes of discussion in this debate should not be interpreted as an inference on my part that I do not consider the other recommendations to be significant. Indeed they are, and I have no hesitation in endorsing them in the hope that all recommendations in the report will be given most careful consideration by the various authorities to whom they are directed.

In conclusion let me say I tend to agree with the emphases placed by the mover of the resolution, the hon. member for St. John's East, on those recommendations contained in the report to which he has made reference. My major disagreement, however, is with his continuing efforts to place the blame for the problems of CEMA to date at the feet of the federal Minister of Agriculture, when he so well knows, as do all participating members of the committee, that CEMA will only be effective when it receives the full support, in practice as well as theory, of all 11 ministers across the country.

**Mr. Allan Lawrence (Northumberland-Durham):** Madam Speaker, I do not believe I will take up all the time that has been allotted to me. Those of us who were privileged to sit on the parliamentary committee that studied the egg mess for a number of weeks put in an extremely busy time at meetings which were going on morning, noon and night. I think I speak for all of those members when I say that it was a very interesting time. Many of us learnt—at least, we think we have learned—a great deal about the egg industry of this country. We learned a new language, really. Not only did we learn about quotas but we were introduced to such phrases as the “crack market”, the “shell trade”, the “fresh trade”. Indeed, it was almost like going back to law school and learning legal phrases and jargon. A lot of us had to learn a completely new phraseology.

**An hon. Member:** “Sunny side up.”

**Mr. Lawrence:** Yes, “sunny side up”. I think we got a little too involved with many of the details, and this is one reason I am not going to go into too much detail tonight.

Underneath it all, Madam Speaker, when you really sat back and thought about it, was there not something, and is there not still something, screwy about what is going on in Canada and in the world today, especially in terms of agricultural production? We all know there is a world wide shortage of protein foods. Yet all we talk about are quotas, restrictions, and measures such as that, including planned production and supply control, all of which ultimately will have but one effect and one effect only, namely, the limiting of production of a very valuable food, the lack of which is causing starvation in some parts of the world today. As I say, there must be something screwy about this.

I must say the minister did not get off as easily in the committee as he got off in the House tonight. He can

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disclaim responsibility all he wants. He can say “No, it's not me, I have nothing to do with it, and the government has nothing to do with it”. But I would remind him that the federal Minister of Agriculture accepted responsibility for a national egg marketing scheme in this country and, to put it as simply as I can, this Minister of Agriculture boobed, and boobed badly, in respect to this particular industry. If the minister was going to take on this job in face of world wide shortage of protein, in face of the supply situation, the feed situation and the existing production situation in this country, then I do not think he can shrug off his responsibility in the way he attempted to shrug it off in the House this evening.

During the committee hearings this simple question was put directly to the minister: “Mr. Minister, do you not believe that you bear some responsibility for what is happening now and what has happened in the egg industry in this country?” There was, Madam Speaker, a very pregnant pause for a minute, and then he finally admitted that he did have some responsibility for it.

Rather than go into detail, let me try to paint with a broad brush what has gone wrong in the industry today. Speaking of broad brushes, I must say this about the committee. I think that committee was a hard working committee which delved into all sorts of things. As I said, we worked morning, noon and night. But so far as the very touchy situation that the minister had backed himself into is concerned, I must say that the committee turned out to be a complete whitewash with regard to the responsibility that the Minister of Agriculture should bear to the egg industry of this country.

In saying that, I do not want any member to follow up with the sort of parroting that we have heard tonight and say that we are trying to blame everything onto poor old Gene Whelan. That is not what I am saying. I do not think that is what the members of my party have been saying, and I do not think that anyone who listened to the committee hearings would attempt to reach that conclusion. But what we do say, Madam Speaker, and what the committee, due to its majority of members of the government party, was not honest enough to admit to itself, is that a major responsibility for the mess that existed rested in the office of the Minister of Agriculture; there is no question about that.

Why else would the minister come along tonight and try to say, “Look what a good boy I have been; I have cleared up the mess”? Why would he say, “Look at the pressure that I have put on the National Farm Products Marketing Council, which in turn put pressure on CEMA, which in turn have put pressure on the provincial boards. Because of what I have done, CEMA has now got a new general manager. Because of what I have done, the provincial boards are now playing ball where they were not playing ball before. Because of what I have now done, within a year we will have a worth-while national egg marketing scheme in this country”.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Lawrence:** I hear some hon. members on the other side banging their desks. I think that is great. But the point is that it could have been done two years ago by this same minister, and it was not done. There have been two