

you who have not reached the same level of wages as people in other parts of the motion. He wants you to remain at two bucks an hour, \$2.25, or whatever the wage is, and leave people in other parts of the nation earning \$5, \$7 or \$10, because he thinks you fishermen are getting too much."

Is that what the Leader of the Opposition is talking about when he mentions a freeze? He has never explained it in this House in a way that makes sense to any fisherman or farmer. Actually, it does not make sense to some of his own members because they are not here to support him.

Mr. Stanfield: There are a lot more of them here than Liberals.

Mr. Whelan: Has he anything to offer to guarantee production in this country? Members of the official opposition talk about instability, but when they urge a 90 day freeze they are causing instability because then people do not want to invest in livestock or other production. I blame them as much as anybody else. I blame the whole program that they have been bombarding the country with, and I say that all they have to do is look south and see what happened with a freeze there.

Mr. Woolliams: They are looking north and seeing what is happening here.

Mr. Whelan: And I can tell you they are really interested in what has been happening here. They only wish they could be about 50 per cent as successful as we have been.

There is a strong relationship between high food prices around the world and inflation around the world. No one will deny that relationship. There is a completely false rumour that high food prices are causing inflation. I am no economist, Mr. Speaker, and thank God for that, but even I can see that this is putting the cart before the horse. Inflation has caused higher food prices and it was the last area to move up, in all nations. Indeed, in many cases it was high time that the primary food producer got higher prices. The failing confidence of people in the various monetary systems of the world caused them to buy commodities, including agricultural commodities, that they never bought before rather than hang on to currencies that they considered unreliable.

● (1720)

People in North America have been buying food like never before. I have said it before and I will say it again: inflation is partly the fault of politicians and the people in the media who create a fear of food shortage by using headlines such as "Food Will Be Rationed", "Food Will Be Scarce", "Prices Will Skyrocket" and so on. It is well known that the sale of home freezers has never been as high in the history of North America. There is more food stored in basements and utility rooms of homes than ever before. In some cases, people have not one or two but three freezers full of food, and they are still buying on the fresh market.

An hon. Member: How many freezers have you got?

Cost of Living

Mr. Whelan: I have always had a freezer, Mr. Speaker. Recently I sent out a newsletter in my constituency telling people that they should conserve food when it is abundant rather than let it go to waste. It may shock some people but in the part of Canada where I live, tons and tons of food go to waste. I do not see the hon. members from the Hamilton area in the House, but there is a big problem now in Hamilton with the food that people throw away. It is estimated that our affluent society throws away from 10 per cent to 25 per cent of the food it buys. Some nations would be envious of the food discarded by our posh restaurants, even those in this city today.

I have before me a cartoon or a picture which appeared in one of our newspapers today. The wording under the picture indicates that the world knows Canadians can afford steak only once a week, and the picture shows a starving African eating the newspaper. We are amongst the luckiest people in the world, Mr. Speaker, there is no denying that. In an article in one of our daily newspapers recently the reporter compared the food he bought for his family on August 27, 1963 with what he bought on August 27, 1973 and compared his present earning power with that of ten years ago. He proved that he can buy more food now than he could ten years ago. I think there have been some instances where food prices have been too high, but I do ask people to be honest and factual.

Financiers have hedged or sought security in buying commodities and it is at this point that speculators have had a field day. This has caused chaos in the livestock and poultry feed area in our nation. Because of the protein shortage in the world there has been speculation in soybeans. We are expediting all kinds of programs to produce protein but climatic conditions, etc. allow us to do only so much. Soybean speculators all around the world increased the price of soybean protein to livestock and poultry producers from \$109 per ton a year ago to over \$500 this year. Nothing much could be done about that because it was a world problem but the price has recently dropped from \$360 a ton to \$202 a ton.

Farmers do not like to be treated like a yoyo, Mr. Speaker. We hear some economists or professors say that we could get rid of half the farmers and put them on welfare. I say let us put half the professors on welfare because I do not think we need them.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Paproski: Your whole staff.

Mr. Whelan: There is a surplus of professors, but they get nice jobs in universities and are not subjected to every whim or fancy of our society. Our farmers do not want to be indentured, they want the stability that the professors have but which the professors would deny the farmers. My economist friends—and it may surprise some people that I have friends who are economists, Mr. Speaker—tell me that agriculture is a pretty important sector of our economy. They recognize that more now than they ever did before, not only because of the actual production, but also because of its job and wealth creation, helping to improve the standard of living of all Canadians.

The Agricultural Economic Research Council calculates that agriculture influences 42 per cent of our economy.