

all know that. It is not perfect. However, many things will have to be perfected in the future.

Within the past couple of years national marketing legislation has been passed by the House of Commons. Our unions, which are so important for the development of Canada, can get people together to work as a team. The United Automobile Workers have been able to get what they regard as reasonable pay for the work they do. The workers at International Nickel have a union. But the farmers have not been united. This is because they have not had legislation that would allow them to unite across Canada. However, the national marketing legislation which was passed last year after much controversy and criticism from people not on the government side of the House will be a good thing for the agricultural future of Canada. I would be the first to admit it has not had a substantial effect up to the moment, but these improvements do not happen in a year or so. As a result of that legislation we have the national egg marketing plan. That was set up as a result of the passage of Bill C-176. It has had a dramatic effect on the returns of egg marketing plan producers. No one can deny that.

With regard to stability, we do not only need stability as far as hogs, tomatoes and vegetables are concerned. We need stability as far as our cattle products are concerned. Incidentally, sales of our beef products produce more revenue than wheat, which might surprise some people. I hope that when the cattlemen come to Ottawa tomorrow to meet government officials, they will be able to sell this government, my government, the idea that for a certain short period of time this particular industry needs help.

The outlook for farmers in Canada, in my opinion, if agriculture is properly handled by national farm marketing agencies and sympathetic government—I include not only the federal government but all provincial governments—is bright. Let us not forget that the agricultural industry of Canada is divided into many different segments. For example, the province of Quebec is responsible for the goods produced and sold in that province and for those which come from the province and are sold in other parts of Canada. The Department of Agriculture looks after foreign sales, and I would say the prospects for foreign sales have never been better.

Much criticism is made by our friends opposite who doubtless are sincere in their criticism. They say that the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) has not done this, or he has done too much of that. But one thing they cannot say is that he is not friendly with many world powers. I think one of the greatest things in years to come will be that our present Prime Minister will go down in history for his friendliness with the great nation of China which has one-quarter of the world's population. Future trading opportunities with this huge nation are absolutely unlimited; and their people have to eat, too. The same can be said about domestic farm development and our trade with our American friends, and so on.

I have one other point. I mention, this, not because the gentleman concerned is a particular friend of mine but because he is a friend of many people in this House. As you know, Mr. Speaker, there has been much criticism of food prices in the last several weeks. A very substantial pamphlet known as the Pringle report, dealing with the

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dissemination of information regarding complexities relating to cost factors from farm input to the dining table, has been published. I wish that all people in Canada had the opportunity to read this report. It shows that farmers have many things against them, that in order to provide good food to the people of Canada they have to spend a great deal of money.

Mr. Bert Hargrave (Medicine Hat): Mr. Speaker, I suggest there is ample evidence of the government's lack of leadership in agricultural policy matters, both in the short term and in long term planning for the future of Canadian agriculture. For this reason I am very pleased to take part in this debate. I wish to comment quite specifically about a very short term, indeed emergency, situation in our Canadian cattle industry, and if time permits I should like to discuss a most important long term item pertaining to beef production in Canada.

Recently there has been considerable discussion, even disagreement, between beef producers over the amount of protection, if any, which our Canadian beef industry needs from the fluctuations in United States markets that occur from time to time. The Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Whelan) is well aware of these points of view. Yesterday I was privileged to attend the mid-term directors' meeting in Regina of the Canadian Cattlemen's Association, and this item, specifically as it relates to the currently excessive United States fat cattle imports, was the burning issue. Let us look at the problem. The Canadian beef industry is geared almost entirely to supplying beef for our domestic market. Because of the close economic ties between ourselves and the United States, the historic development of our industries and the very similar economic forces operating in these two industries, it has always been an accepted principle that Canadian and United States beef markets are, and should remain, closely related.

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The advantages of this have been threefold, I suggest. First, the American market has in the past been far less volatile than ours and has thus formed a stabilizing factor in our market. Until recently the United States market was the largest deficit market in the world, and it was also the highest priced market in the world. Because of our close price relationship, the Canadian industry has been forced to stay, you might say, on its toes to remain competitive. These three factors have been very real.

However, over the past year there were a number of new factors which have changed things, and new forces have been introduced. These are noteworthy. First, the American market has become extremely unstable because of forces that are not operating in Canada and over which we have no control. The direction of United States industry in the short term is being determined more and more by political rather than by economic forces. The United States market is presently not the force it was in the world pricing system and it is certainly not the high priced market. However, this situation may well change if their dollar and our dollar change in value.

There is considerable evidence that the recent close ties between our pricing system and that of the United States has created an unstable situation that is not conducive to