

keep other parts of the country divided. It is not a political type of division. It is a straight market, economic type of division. It is the kind of power game large corporations play. It is the kind of power game which can only be counteracted by federal intervention and by an agricultural policy which takes a national approach and attempts to keep the country together. This can and would counteract this type of thing.

I think beef marketing is where the minister has shone the most. He has been very eloquent in talking about the archaic system we have as far as beef marketing is concerned. He has described it as coming out of the middle ages. He has been very hard on the beef marketing system. He is the Minister of Agriculture and he has held that post for a number of years. He has a very highly developed, highly technical and experienced marketing staff. We spend close to half of the department's budget on marketing, as we should. Yet, has he directed that marketing staff to bring up another system? He has been critical of this system. He has been in a position to do something about it. Where is his plan? Where did it go? We have not seen any evidence that he has directed people to draw up an alternate method of marketing beef. He has produced no new and improved method of marketing beef. He has simply ridiculed the present system and he has challenged everybody to work toward something better.

The point I wish to leave with the minister is—and we will be discussing specifics later on during the course of the debate—if farmers are to be exhorted to unite, what good example do we have from the minister to create unity in the beef, potato, grains and pork industries? Where are the examples? What has taken place? What has the minister proposed and what is he doing? The evidence is not there. We see the big hat. We listen to the words. We await the policies.

Mr. Whelan: Mr. Chairman, first I wish to raise a point of order. I find the procedure a little hard to follow, especially when members question me and make accusations, and then they refuse to give unanimous consent to allow me to answer the questions. With my inability to get unanimous consent I then take away from the time, from the democratic right of this side of the House to participate. It is not correct, Mr. Chairman, that if I take the time to answer I am taking the time of one of the members on this side of the House? That is the way I understand the procedures here. If I were sitting in the gallery I would think it a little rough that when a former minister asks me questions and I seek unanimous consent to answer, they will not give it to me. It appears they do not want the answers to the questions. I do not know if I have a point of order, or if I understand the procedures correctly. Could you clarify that for me, Mr. Chairman?

The Assistant Deputy Chairman: I will attempt to do so. The speaking time allotted to all members, including the minister, is 20 minutes. I would indicate to the minister that in previous sittings of Committee of the Whole there have been some instances where parties have agreed internally that certain of their members would split the 20 minutes. That has

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usually been split in two periods of ten minutes each. But the time allotment is 20 minutes.

With respect to the matter mentioned by the minister relating to whether or not he would have to seek from members of his own party time out of their allotment of time in which to respond, that is not correct. It is not an allocation of time to a party. It is an individual member's allocation of time.

● (1640)

If I understand what the minister is suggesting, then possibly a member from his side of the House might give up some of his time in order that the minister may answer. I do not know how it could be worked out mechanically. It can certainly be done with a little planning in advance, if the Chair is advised and the House is made aware of the arrangement. It has been done previously over the past couple of days.

I also realize that the minister is attempting to solve the problem that occurs when he is asked a series of questions but is unable to respond because the allotted time of the questioner has expired. I do not have an answer to that problem. The minister makes what seems to me to be a good point, that perhaps there is a problem with procedure in that regard, but it is the procedure with which we are working at the moment. I can only say that hon. members have now heard the minister's comments on that problem and presumably members who choose to use their entire 20 minutes will be aware that even if they do ask questions they will not obtain an answer if the 20 minutes have expired.

I go back to the other aspect and say that if the minister wishes to make arrangements with other members of his own party, the House has not objected to this procedure in previous sittings in this Committee of the Whole.

Mr. Murta: Mr. Chairman, I was one of the hon. members who objected to the minister having the time to answer the hon. member for Elgin, and it was based on my experience in this committee during discussion on the transportation estimates. An hon. member is allotted 20 minutes and he can use that time in any way he sees fit. The minister should realize that his own parliamentary secretary also spoke for 20 minutes, and if it was important enough for him to make some comments on the comments of the hon. member for Elgin, he certainly could have used part of the 20 minutes allotted to his parliamentary secretary or, for that matter, used the entire 20 minutes.

The only way in which this committee can operate properly is if we all adhere to the 20 minute time limit. For example, as the next member to speak from our party I intend to ask questions of the minister. In this way hopefully we can have an exchange with regard to some of the various areas in which I am particularly interested.

Mr. Taylor: Mr. Chairman, much can be said for this matter on both sides. Yesterday during the Employment and Immigration estimates, several Liberal members used their 20 minutes to make a speech. That is their right, but the purpose of this exercise is to obtain information from the ministers. I