

*The Address—Mr. Whelan*

government has implemented for the beef industry are closer to the policies of the hon. member for Medicine Hat than they are to the policies put forward by Mr. Camp.

Ministers of agriculture and ministers of consumer and corporate affairs have asked for an inquiry into the beef industry. I understand this will also be asked for by the first ministers of the four provinces concerned. We are taking a very hard look at an inquiry into the beef industry because there is utter chaos there at the present time. I receive many letters from beef producers setting out what they are receiving for cattle, how they are being bought, and many other things. They may not all be right, but they certainly cannot all be wrong. I hope to be able to make an announcement shortly on the action we intend to take in accordance with the request of these people.

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

**Mr. Whelan:** Hon. members who represent ridings where farmers and agriculture are important to the local economy know that this country needs to return farmers and agriculture to their proper place in our national society and economy. I wish to put the record straight. The riding I was re-elected to represent is 88 per cent urban. I am sure the members of the New Democratic Party realize this. That is why they threw all their weight behind the president of local 444 of the Chrysler union in an attempt to defeat me. I got the biggest urban vote ever. I said the same things to the people of that city as I am saying here. They realized what I said was right and better for the nation. That is not what the other candidate said. Some people who represent rural ridings should check to see what he did say. I am referring to representatives of the NDP. Those representing rural areas realize that maintaining high agricultural production is most important.

One of my main concerns is what we are doing to our producers through some of the things we are saying. If we destroy the morale of any person who is a productive entity, we will not get any production out of him. I appeal to everyone, when talking about the agricultural industry, to be factual, honest and straightforward. This country needs to return farmers and agriculture to their proper place in our national society and economy. We cannot have anyone, let alone editorial writers who do not sign their names, saying, "What is the matter with the government? They are only a minority. Why don't they forget them?" They know that the policies and programs put forward by this government during the last election campaign are headed in the right direction. Those hon. members know that wage and price controls on farm products would be a disaster. They know that farmers need incentives to increase production. The Leader of the Opposition knows that better than anyone.

They know that farmers need some guarantees of stability for the future. They know that young farmers need assistance to establish viable farms. These are all programs and policies this government intends to present to the House of Commons for approval. People are beginning to see the points I have been making. Last night a local television station showed a farm here in Ontario that is going to be paved over soon because, as I have said all along, our priorities have not been on agriculture and food and farmers but on highways and parking lots.

[Mr. Whelan.]

The hon. member for Cape Breton-East Richmond (Mr. Hogan) spoke about the world food meeting which is to take place in Rome. I attended the FAO meeting last year. I can say that the farmers cannot be blamed for poor world distribution of food. Society as a whole has not accepted the responsibility of assisting those who are not as fortunate as we. In some instances people think it is morally right to throw away almost as much food as they buy. Not many think it is morally right, but some do because they continue to throw away large amounts of food. When I attended the FAO meeting last year I did not meet one minister of agriculture who was a farmer. Therefore, the farmer certainly cannot be blamed for poor world distribution of food.

I have said the farmers of this nation will increase their productivity by 50 per cent in five years if they are given a decent return for what they produce and a guarantee that they will receive the same as the rest of our society wants, demands and receives. Some people do not think that is necessary for the agricultural industry.

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

**Mr. Whelan:** We know that if we could control wild oats in western Canada, in one year we could increase our cereal grains by \$1 billion. This would require added fertilizer, better seed, and so on. If the incentive were there, we could increase our productivity in western Canada by 50 per cent in five years. We know the beef industry increased by nearly 10 per cent every year until this year. That is a 50 per cent increase in five years. We also know that we can increase productivity in our industry because of automation and other things that go along with productivity.

As one hon. member previously mentioned, it is not the farmer's job to give away his turkeys. That is the job of society as a whole. Farmers will participate in it. It has been proven in western Canada that they held over 30 per cent of the world stock of grain without receiving any compensation. We are able to take our place in food aid mainly because of our farmers, their productivity and the fact they store grain on their own. They do not receive any help from the do-gooders who run around this nation challenging anything and everything. I would sometimes like to check their bankbooks to see their donations to CARE or other food programs. I am very suspicious of some of those people when they make so much noise.

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

**Mr. Whelan:** I welcome the comments of hon. members. I welcome their sincere criticisms and efforts to improve the programs and legislation we will introduce. The farmers of Canada expect this parliament to take action on the policies and programs outlined during the last election campaign. I look forward to your co-operation in getting on with that job.

**Mr. McGrath:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. We were kind enough to let the minister go beyond his time. Perhaps he will permit a question.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Penner):** The hon. member can ask the question and the minister can agree to answer,