

● (1550)

Today Canadian consumers are paying a high price because the government of that time had a policy which allowed an inflow of beef to this country. That was very appealing to the consumer at the time but the price the consumer is paying now is the result of mismanagement in an earlier day.

In my constituency there was a cattleman who collected 5,000 signatures on a petition that was tabled in this House. It has taken six years for the legislation requested, in part, in that petition to be introduced. I submit that the cruel experience of those ranchers is now beginning to bear fruit.

I should like to commend the legislation and to say if there is any way, now or in the future, we can do away with some of the ministerial discretion in the legislation which is so politically damaging in the long run, then the bill ought to do a great deal of good for both consumers and producers.

I will take my seat now, Mr. Speaker, knowing there are others who want to speak on the bill. I commend the minister for paying close attention to the remarks of my good friend, the hon. member for Medicine Hat, and also for bringing this legislation forward for the benefit of all Canadians.

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

**Mr. S. J. Korchinski (Mackenzie):** Mr. Speaker, I will just speak for a few moments but I want to cover a couple of matters I think should be brought up at this time.

I was interested to hear the hon. member for Humboldt-Lake Centre (Mr. Althouse), from my neighbouring constituency, say that we do not even consume the amount of beef we produce. The question that came to my mind was, why in the world would we need supply-management if we have to import beef in order to meet our own requirements? If that is the case, then obviously we do not need government interference.

I know the minister has been a strong advocate of supply-management in the cattle industry as being the answer to the problem. I want to ask him, just on that score, why we need supply-management since we certainly do not produce enough for our own requirements? In addition to that, I think the minister knows that statistics show we are approaching the point where there will be more civil servants than farmers. Supply-management will reduce the number of producers and will lead to other problems and added production costs. Quotas will have to be bought, as is the case in milk production, so all that will be introduced is another cost. Surely that is not what we need at this time of high interest; the high cost of land, machinery and all other costs that go into cattle production. What we need is efficient producers.

Some 14 to 15 years ago when I was in Poland I heard officials in that country quote reams and reams of statistics. Today, when I heard the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Ostiguy) quote all kinds of figures to show that production is going this way, that way and in all directions, I thought of the situation in Poland now where people stand in line waiting to get maybe half a pound of meat. This is what happens with a supply-management

### *Meat Import Act*

situation. I fail to see why you need any more dramatic illustration than that.

The absolute requirement is to eradicate fluctuations such as took place in the first five weeks of this year when prices were depressed as a result of the importing of fat cattle in from the United States. Perhaps the minister should consider a freight movement policy, since he indicated in his comments he has paid out something like \$46 million for hogs this year and estimates that next year he will have to pay out about \$140 million. Obviously, under any kind of supply-management program, a certain amount of money is involved. If in the situation we had this year—

**Mr. Whelan:** There is no supply-management involved.

**Mr. Korchinski:** Yes, there is, in the sense that the province of Saskatchewan has a program. The minister knows that programs are in place at this particular time.

I suggest to the minister that if he wants to eliminate the effect of the price of cattle coming from the United States, he should put in place a freight assistance program. If the price is depressed by cattle moving into the Montreal or Toronto market from the United States, then certainly we should move our own cattle. We do not have to move live cattle; we could move slaughtered cattle. We should move enough supplies so that even if the price is depressed, it is with our own cattle, and is only temporary. The situation could be controlled by removing the freight assistance. American cattle certainly would not come in if the price was lower or if there was not a buck to be made. This would not interfere with any GATT arrangement and the result would be the same.

We need more people in the production cycle. At the moment, even the grain industry is gearing up for more production and it will soon be in a similar situation. If we do not produce enough for our own requirements we should not put these people out of production. Once they are out, they stay out for a long, long time and many of them will never come back.

Mr. Speaker, I do not want to hold this bill from going to committee, so with these few remarks I will sit down. Thank you very much.

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

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Is the House ready for the question?

**Some hon. Members:** Question.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the said motion?

**Some hon. Members:** Agreed.

Motion agreed to, bill read the second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Agriculture.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** It being four o'clock p.m. the House will now proceed to the consideration of private members'