

*Agriculture*

are called named products, which include beef and pork. It also provides for any commodity to be covered in any year which is so designated. If producers make representations to me, and I feel that their representations are proper and that it should be a designated product, then we name it and go ahead and designate that product in faith. The record shows that we have used it time and time again for those producers who say they are affected by overproduction or an influx of crops in some other part of Canada or some other part of the world which depresses the prices which they are receiving for their crops here.

However, over the years, various provinces have chosen to implement their own stabilization program based on what commodities they think are most important to their areas, and also based on what their provincial treasuries can carry. I have been strongly opposed to this from the beginning. It balkanizes farming in Canada and works against the basic idea of confederation. Provinces have agreed, time and time again, not to piggyback and not to pile their programs on top of any of our federal programs. However, that is the very thing they are doing and the very thing they said they would not do. They said they would not piggyback on top of any of our programs.

Therefore, in essence, when we are working this out on hog stabilization, I can honestly say to Your Honour that my cabinet colleagues did not interfere at all, because that is a mandatory program. I make the decisions on how the payments will be made after I receive advice from the stabilization board. We have told them time and time again that to provide economic equity, we cannot have, say, a rich province putting in a program, while a province which does not have those economic resources has no program. We cannot say to them, "All you are going to get is a federal program, but you are paid as much as \$12 a hog plus the \$8.96 we are giving you, so you will receive over \$20 a hog," while a person, say, in Manitoba will only receive the \$8.96 and must depend solely on the federal program. There are provinces in Canada which have that kind of program. There are other provinces that have income assurance programs, such as British Columbia. Under that program they took our money, which is their right as that was the arrangement, but they objected to the way in which we ran it. All anyone has to do is to check the records and the precedents set under ASA 75 and see that the bill says very clearly that there must be fairness in the administration of the act. That is what we are trying to do, Mr. Speaker. We are trying to provide equity for pork producers. No matter what part of the country they are in, they are competing for the domestic market or the international market and economic equity must be provided for them.

● (1620)

It is wrong for anyone to say that I do not know what is going on with the hog industry in Ontario. I am well aware of the agricultural programs in the province of Ontario. The federal government contributes many more millions of dollars to agriculture in Ontario than the provincial government does, although it has the economic resources to do more.

I object when my old friend, the minister of agriculture for Ontario, says that this is a federal responsibility. He should look around to see the programs that other provinces have put into effect for agriculture in their areas. The purpose of stabilization programs is to offer a stop-loss factor. It is poor planning for producers not to be concerned about how much the market can absorb, especially with perishable dairy and meat products and things that have a short storage life. It is just economic nonsense and economic suicide. The programs that the provinces started on their own have been wrong, Mr. Speaker. I know that.

For the first time this year we have built a provision into the hog stabilization program that deducts provincial payments from the federal payment. We do not deduct the payments made by producers. It has not been well received by those provinces that have supplementary programs, but has been praised by the others.

It is the one thing that I could do within my authority to bring about equal treatment of all Canadian producers. I will not belabour that point, Mr. Speaker.

On the subject of orderly marketing, I will also welcome any assistance members opposite would care to give. They can start with the beef and pork products. I do not think anyone has done more to encourage producers to adopt orderly marketing than I have, Mr. Speaker.

But the point is that to encourage is all that can be done. How farmers market their produce is up to them. The fact that dairy farmers and turkey, broiler and egg producers have established national marketing agencies, is a credit to them. They have brought order into the production and marketing of their commodities and at the same time they have undertaken to provide Canadian consumers with a steady supply of high-quality produce at reasonable and stable prices. The figures show, Mr. Speaker, that over the past 15 years, the consumer prices of commodities marketed national supply management programs have increased less than the over-all food sector of the consumer price index and far less than prices for beef and pork, where producers insist on operating under something they call "free enterprise." It is free for some but the people who handle the product make the same or a higher profit than they did before. The producer has no real trust in the market place. Under the pork and beef marketing systems which are operating in Canada today, the producers must take what they are given for the produce. There is a hodge-podge of pork producers' organizations trying to do a job of marketing the product. They have not done badly. To subsidize the United States and Japanese treasuries by selling their product below the cost of production is just economic nonsense, but in essence that is what they are doing.

As we saw on Monday, however, the demand for supply management in the hog industry is growing. Several hundred producers were here on the Hill to demonstrate their concern. A similar movement is growing in the beef industry as well, although the Canadian Cattlemen's Association likes to pretend it is just a small radical group.