

# Talks To Cattle Men

I am very happy to be here today and to have this opportunity to speak to a gathering which represents not only the cattle industry of the Interior but all sectors of the economy of this part of British Columbia.

My remarks this noon will be directed mainly to the cattle business. I do this for two reasons. There are many cattlemen here today and the purpose of my visit to Kamloops is to open the bull sale. In addition, developments in the cattle business and the future direction of that industry will be very important for all in the Interior of this province; for what happens to the cattle business will be, in large measure, reflected in the economy of this area.

I speak to you today as one who grew up in the business in the drylands of Southern Alberta. I am still in it both as a rancher and as one who sells supplies to other ranchers. Trips back home to look at the cattle do, although the opportunity to get together with other cattlemen and swap bulls, and the bull, runs a close second behind being on the home ranch.

While the cattle business has undergone many challenges in past decades, ranching has probably had the fewest changes of any of the major sectors of the Canadian agricultural economy. The changes have come mainly in the feeding side of the cattle operation with the development of large feedlots in Eastern Canada, the American Midwest and now, the Canadian West and the American Southwest. Cattle aren't going to market as grassed cattle any more. We ranchers raise feeder cattle and usually turn them over to someone else who uses corn or barley or sorghum to bring them to market weight and finish.

Feedlots which finish tens of thousand of head of cattle in a year are becoming commonplace. Last year in the United States, according to the official figures of the United States Department of Agriculture, in the 32 major cattle feeding states, one per cent of the feedlots produced 47 per cent of the fed cattle marketed. Some have gone so far as to predict that 2,500 feedlots will end up producing approximately 70% of the fed cattle in the United States in a few years.

The 1 per cent figure I just mentioned represents 2,080 feedlots. They marketed just over 10 million head of fed cattle last year.

While I do not intend to get into a long philosophical discussion as to whether this trend which has developed in the United States is desirable, I would like to note in passing that it does not seem to have doomed the efficient family farm feedlot which produces its own feed. Referring to the same set of statistics, the State of Iowa which is the heartland of the corn-based agricultural economy of Midwestern United States, produced almost 20 per cent of the feed cattle in the United States. Yet there were only 165 feedlots of the 46,000 in Iowa which marketed more than 1,000 head of cattle last year and these accounted for only 345,000 of the 4,350,000 head of fed cattle marketed in Iowa.

But let us return to Canada. I have mentioned the American experience and although many of us still do, although the opportunity discussed the American spend a lot of time in the statistics because what is happening in the cattle health items have been

developed which have reduced death losses. But if the oldtimer were there at spring roundup, he wouldn't feel too much out of place. The calves are still born in the middle of a March blizzard. They still come out of a cow that is probably one of the three traditional beef breeds. The calves still have to be branded and castrated. They are still turned back on summer range with their mothers and rounded up in the fall and sold through an auction. And, I suppose, the old timer would not find it too tough a job to follow the auctioneer.

However, I think that the oldtimer would be witnessing the end of an era. For I feel that just as changes have come to the cattle feeding business, changes are on the

way for the rancher and the cow-calf operator. These changes will not be the option of the rancher. They will be asked for by his customers - the feeders, whether large or small. The best business is one that has satisfied customers. The side of the cattle business which produces feeder cattle will have to change, as its customers become more discriminating about the product they want and less satisfied if they do not get it.

Some of these changes will be demands which originate on the feedlot. As the cattle feeder finds his margin continually being cut by increasing feeder cattle prices and with other costs rising, he will demand cattle which have the potential to give him the maximum performance on the feedlot. This will mean that the cattle which have the greatest potential for growth will be the ones in demand. Since the ability to gain is inherited, this will place an additional pressure on the rancher to use the best bulls he can get. You can't use the eyeball test to measure a bull's ability to gain, which is one of the most, if not the most important characteristic he passes on to his progeny.

The ability of a bull to gain is best measured in a performance test of some kind, whether it is done at a government test station or at

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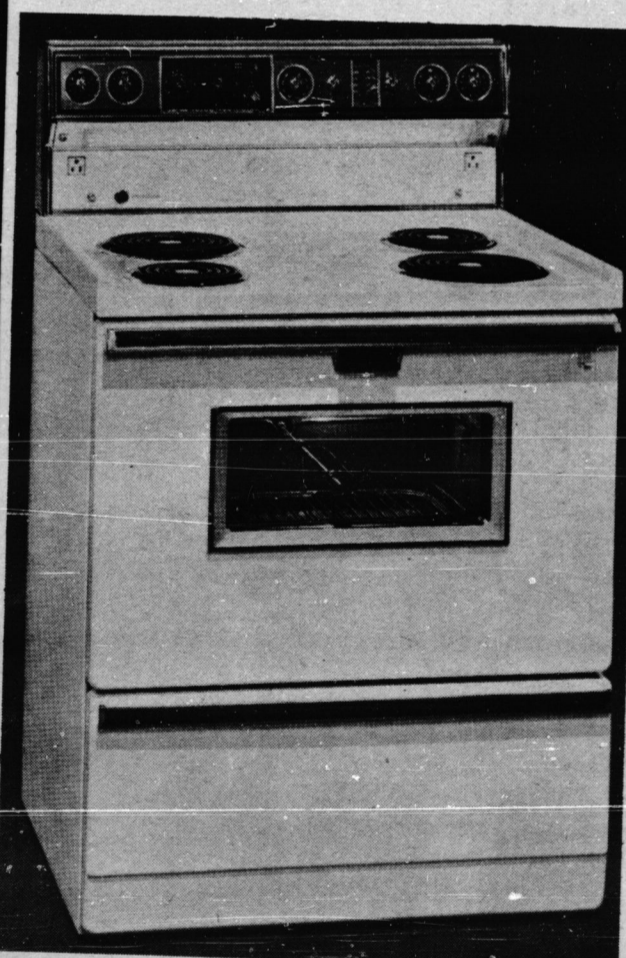
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# Royal Commission On Farm Machinery

Never in recorded history has any industry had to make such a large adjustment to technological change in so short a time - and with so little government help - as has Canadian agriculture.

This is the view expressed by Dr. Clarence L. Barber, Chairman of the Royal Commission on Farm Machinery and Head of the Economics Department at the University of Manitoba, in a paper 1 prepared for the Canadian Agriculture Congress in Ottawa later this month.

Dr. Barber said a large part of the change in Canadian agriculture - change that had reduced the farm population by 1,250,000 in the last 25 years -- was due to technological changes in farm machinery.

These machinery changes produced economic benefits worth roughly \$1,000,000,000 a year, he estimated. Yet the great bulk of these benefits had gone to the consumers, who now can buy food at lower prices than would have been possible had the machinery improvements not taken place. Little of the benefit had gone to the farmer, except in terms of higher value for his land.

Contrasting the farmers' situation with that of railway workers affected by technological change, Dr. Barber said that if Mr. Justice Samuel Freedman's recommendations concerning the CNR run-throughs are applied, displaced railway workers will receive substantial protection.

But if it is right and proper to extend this kind of protection to railway workers, why is it not right and proper to accord similar protection to those employed in agriculture? Both are victims of technological change. In both instances society receives very large benefits as a result of this technical change.

Providing the same kind of protection to those employed in agriculture would be more difficult. But should not the issue be squarely faced?"

Paper 1

"Technological Changes in Farm Machinery and Canadian Agriculture."

Dr. Barber said the rapid changes in farm machinery have had these major effects:

- The number of workers in agriculture has been greatly reduced, although farm output has increased 50 per cent in the last two decades.
- This was due mainly to the use of improved labour-saving types of machinery rather than more machinery of the same kind. In relation to farm production, the amount of machinery and equipment on Canadian farms now is only moderately higher than it was 40 years ago.
- New machines have made it possible to farm more land, so the size of farms has

grown -- a trend that is likely to continue. How far will it go? One measure is the "survival test" - a test that separates all farms into two size groups, one expanding and the other declining. The dividing line for Canada as a whole is an estimated 560 acres, and 80 per cent of all farms and nearly half the country's total farm acreage are still below that level. The level is estimated at 240 acres in Ontario and Quebec, 560 acres in Manitoba and Alberta, and 760 acres in Saskatchewan.

While labour earnings have been depressed in relation to earnings in other jobs, returns to farm land have increased and land values in many parts of Canada have risen sharply. In Saskatchewan alone, the value of farm land has doubled since 1960. The increase across Canada has averaged 50 per cent. Not all

by governments or others to supply it.

Dr. Barber also sharply criticized the small amount of farm machinery research undertaken in Canada. Despite the large returns that have resulted from improvements in farm equipment, Canadian governments and universities have until recently "provided an almost negligible amount of funds for research in farm machinery."

- Growth in the size and complexity of farm machines - and the accelerating rate of change - has made farm decision-making more difficult and the whole farming operation riskier. Farmers now need more information and advice on what kind of equipment to buy, yet little has been done

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## Canned And Frozen Peas Plentiful

### PEAS ARE PLENTIFUL

On January 27, 1969, the Honourable Wm. A. Stewart announced the Ontario Food Council would conduct a Plentiful Food Program for Canned and Frozen Peas. This program is unique since Provincial Agriculture Ministers across Canada have been asked by Mr. Stewart to promote these products. The enthusiastic response from other provinces will be a decided asset in moving the 13.5 million pounds of frozen peas and the 1.1 million cases of canned peas in excess of our normal requirements.

Department personnel and others in the food industry are mentioning Peas Are Plentiful when addressing groups of people. Can we count on you to participate in this most important Ontario Food Council program?

MARKETING - 1970 STYLE

Professor John Carew, head of the Horticultural Department, Michigan State University, while addressing the Ontario Vegetable Research Committee, said:

We should anticipate problems of the future and try to speculate what markets new crops will be grown for. In the future, the only vegetables marketed in the fresh trade will be those eaten uncooked, i.e. salads and carrots, but not broccoli, cauliflower, beets, asparagus, which will be processed. It is possible canned tomatoes for salad will be developed and fresh tomatoes may be driven

off the market inside 10 years. Synthetic bacon, a high protein vegetable compound, is already becoming popular and may be a threat to meat sales. The impact of "vegetable milk" on dairy products sales is well known. Our extension and research workers must be forward-looking and anticipate the above type of developments when making recommendations.

### THE CANADA PLUS-ONE PROJECT

The greatest cause of hunger is waste. More than 30% of food produced or imported into developing countries is lost from ignorance about basic food handling and preserving techniques. If Canadian food handling techniques were practiced (our losses are about 1/2%), malnutrition and starvation would probably be greatly reduced in many developing countries at current food production levels. Canadian businessmen, industry, foundations, private citizens and government have been supporting projects on three continents under the "Canada Plus-One" program since January 1968.

National courses to train a nucleus of technicians in pest control and storage techniques have been conducted in Ghana. The next such course will be held in Senegal in March. The first

mobile unit is operating in Chile, and other units are scheduled for Brazil, India, Malaysia and Taiwan. Mobile units tour food processing plants throughout the country and provide grass roots instructions in quality control and modern canning techniques.

The Food Council salutes this most effective project to which so many Canadians, especially in the food industry, are freely giving time and money.

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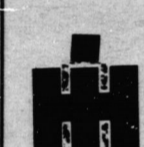
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