



Ralph Bennett in after dinner conversation with a guest at the Lions Club annual Farmers' Night meeting.

## Consumer credit blamed for food price complaints

Ralph Bennett, in speaking to Lions Club members last Thursday evening blamed widespread consumer credit for complaints about high food prices.

"All our financial institutions encourage Canadians to buy more than they can afford. Once all the monthly payments are made, there is seldom enough money left to buy the food the consumer wants," he said.

Mr Bennett was the guest speaker at the annual Farmers Night dinner meeting of the club. Before he retired as a federal department of agriculture livestock expert, he was known around the country as Mr Livestock of Canada. He says of his retirement, "I didn't like it."

Working as a livestock consultant now, the 69-year old voice of the farmer says that age is not entirely a matter of arithmetic, but mental attitudes. Mr Bennett spoke at length on the lack of political clout that prevents farmers from getting what they deserve. The farmer feels that he is grossly underpaid, consumers feel that

prices are too high.

Only seven per cent of the population works on farms, waning political representation and lessening influence makes the farmer's lot a tough one.

It is the high costs of labor that puts the high price on the meat between the farmer and the consumer, according to Mr Bennett. Housewives will be picketing supermarkets while their husbands will be picketing the packing house for higher wages.

While in the US for the America Cattlemen's Association meeting, Mr Bennett witnessed the enormous losses feed lot dealers have had there. Members were told, "we are in a depression".

World wide increase in beef herds followed by adverse weather, higher grain prices, the energy shortage and inflation all affected beef farmers adversely.

With the new closed border between the US and Canada, Canadian beef farmers will have to cut back so that they are supplying only the domestic market.

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