

Canadian Economy

they can find markets for what they are producing. They are saying that but for substantially increased yields this year there might have been difficulties. But they are not saying that it is because of the economic policies of the government that prices are so low. There are other reasons.

● (2212)

The hon. member is saying the aged are alienated. The aged in my riding are saying, "We are now putting money away." They say, "Some of us are embarrassed that we cannot spend all the money we get from our pensions and the supplementary amount given us." They are saying that for the first time in their lives they have savings accounts. They are also saying that some members of the opposition should realize that old age pensions are not there to give them the only payment from which they make their living. They are saying to me, "We intended to put money aside and we did put money aside, and what we are getting is supplemental to what we have put away for our old age." We are thankful that these things are happening. Let us not forget that it was this government that put this program in place, and not some other.

This hon. member went on to say that the budget of last spring was a disaster. He chose to ignore the fact that there had been a 5.2 per cent real growth in the economy notwithstanding the difficulty we had in prevailing upon the opposition to assist us in passing those budget measures—we had to push, cajole and prod them into bringing the matter to a vote. The hon. member preferred to forget all that and pretend it did not happen.

He talked of hope. He said it was lost. He said the Canadian people no longer had any. Is that why he could not contest the statement by one of my hon. friends that the auto industry is looking forward to a better year? Is that why he could not say my hon. friend was wrong when he told us that the housing industry and the appliance industry were also expecting an increase in sales next year? The fact that we are looking forward to increased activity in those areas demonstrates that there is hope. I know that in my part of the country there is substantial hope, substantial recognition of the fact that this country is moving ahead and that the picture of abject destruction which the hon. member drew is not the correct one.

I found it interesting that the hon. member who spoke just before me, and who referred to the "stupidity" of making available the kind of assistance which the Economic Development Corporation provides, should be a member of a party which in 1974, as I recall, adopted, as a sort of watchword, the phrase "people first". I wonder why he now believes that assistance to Third World countries, while at the same time helping ourselves through the provision of some 4,100 man-years of employment in just two years, is stupid. Why is it stupid that we should assist ourselves and at the same time help Third World countries and recognize a social obligation beyond our own boundaries? I do not believe that sharing some of the wealth of this country in those circumstances is

[Mr. Daudlin.]

stupid. On the contrary, I think it is responsible. He also spoke about what went on in the agricultural committee hearing this morning.

● (2217)

I come now to the point I mentioned to my hon. friends. I should like to relate to hon. members an experience which occurred in my area this year. Hon. members know that among other things which are produced in my riding are cantaloupes. Highway 401 also crosses my constituency and along it moves a lot of the produce of southern Ontario on its way to Toronto and Montreal markets. Along this highway also moves products imported from the United States. I have been asking the government to consider taking the same action vis-à-vis the agricultural industry as it took for textiles and other products. Because this summer, when prices on the wholesale market in Toronto for cantaloupe were \$14.75 for a basket of 20 quarts, producers of the same product in my riding were prepared to sell it for \$4.25 per basket. But the Toronto market was listing products from Arizona, Texas and California only.

Why was this so, Mr. Speaker? It was not because the product was not available in Canada; it was because wholesale buyers, wanting some kind of guarantee of a 12 month supply, were telling the Canadian industry that unless they can produce cantaloupe 12 months in the year they did not want it. Thus the consumers of Toronto and Montreal had to pay a high price while the \$4.25 product lay rotting in the fields of southwestern Ontario.

I think it is time consumers' associations picked up things like that and agreed with the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Whelan) that agriculture needs some kind of protection, be it by way of increased tariff, as recommended by the Tariff Board, or, as I have suggested on occasion, by guaranteeing a percentage of the Canadian market to Canadian growers before any kind of import licence is granted. This does not mean that an unrealistic price should be set for the Canadian product so that suddenly Canadian producers make an exorbitant amount of money. But if the Canadian producers of that simple little muskmelon could have been guaranteed this summer access to even 10 per cent of the Canadian market, these producers would have had the opportunity of selling all of the product in their fields. Not only that, but consumers would have benefited by paying one third the price they were forced to pay for the out of country product, and extra work would have been provided for pickers in the fields of southern Ontario at a decent wage. In other words, all parties on all sides of the equation would have benefited.

Unlike my hon. friends on the other side of the House, I am not so sure that my pleas are going to go unheeded. I am satisfied there is going to be a response. I am also looking for the same kind of response to the pleas of the tomato paste industry which, if it were given the protection being offered by the recommendations of the Tariff Board, could produce as many as 1,000 jobs for southwestern Ontario.