

Oral Questions

Is it an urgent matter, but there are mechanisms under the free trade agreement which we believe can be useful in resolving this matter. We will use those mechanisms.

Mr. Maurice Foster (Algoma): Mr. Speaker, the minister knows that last fall when the government accepted the GATT panel decision with regard to ice cream and yogurt that this had the potential to destroy the whole marketing board system in Canada.

What assurance can the minister give the dairy farmers of this country that when the government does propose changes to Article XI of the GATT that we will not be making proposals that will allow massive new access to our processed dairy products to the Canadian market by United States producers? What assurance can he give the industry?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister, President of the Privy Council and Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, the opposition is against the free trade agreement. They are against GATT. They are against trade of all kinds. It is quite obvious.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Mazankowski: He should be the first one to recognize that without trade we would not have much of an agricultural industry because 50 per cent of our agriculture income comes from trade.

The GATT panel that he has referred to has been accepted. We have said from day one that Article XI had to be clarified and strengthened. That has been the position of the Canadian government at the negotiating table.

We will present a formalized position, strengthening and clarifying Article XI so that it will ensure the maintenance of farm marketing boards in Canada.

Clearly, the members of the agricultural community who are involved in the marketing boards and supply management systems are satisfied with our position. Only the hon. member is not.

Mr. David Barrett (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca): Mr. Speaker, I rise on the same subject as raised by my colleague, the member for Moose Jaw—Lake Centre, with the minister last week.

I want to refer to the minister's speech as reported in an article which appeared in *The Toronto Star*. It states:

Mazankowski, who is also agriculture minister, said the intimidation caused by increased inspections of Canadian meat at the border crossings has to stop or Canada will begin to do the same to U.S. imports.

That is what he said. The minister is nodding.

The article states further:

He also lashed out at American "harassment" of our pork producers. These producers face an 8-cent-per-kilogram countervailing duty on shipments exported to the U.S.

And he said Canada will no longer tolerate being caught in the crossfire of the agricultural subsidy war between the United States and the European Community.

Those are tough words.

• (1440)

I will come to my question after this.

But he told reporters that his remarks shouldn't be characterized as retaliation against the Americans.

I want to ask the minister this. Are you playing hardball or pat-a-cake? The Americans are kicking the slats out of the Canadian pork producers. The minister makes a tough speech and then you is not prepared to follow up.

Tell this House, through the Chair, Mr. Minister, whether or not you are prepared to do anything, or are you just making speeches?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister, President of the Privy Council and Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, the answer to that question is yes, we are prepared to do something.

Mr. David Barrett (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca): Mr. Speaker, will the Minister tell this House that he is prepared today to tell the Americans that he wants to invoke an interpretation of 701.4 right now? Is he prepared to do that right now, today?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister, President of the Privy Council and Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, first he was dealing with meat inspection. Then he was dealing with pork. Now he is dealing with wheat. What question does he want answered?

The fact of the matter is the article is there and maybe it is time to test it. We are considering that action.

Mr. Barrett: Pat-a-cake!