

Income Tax

that we could not challenge and compete on equal terms with them. And yet we knew very well, Mr. Speaker, that at the same time the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) was negotiating small economic agreements with the EEC on the back of milk producers. The fact is not known. That was the problem. I think the member for Longueuil (Mr. Olivier) is not much aware of that. The member for Berthier-Maskinongé (Mr. Yanakis) is surely aware of it. I know that the member for Compton (Mr. Tessier) dealt with it. His colleagues did not listen to him carefully, but the papers reported recently that the member for Compton was not satisfied with the government's behaviour. As it turned out, the government chose to let the EEC compete with us, no matter again who was going to pay the price of such a decision.

Again, the government refused to assume its responsibilities and help the milk producers in allocating supplementary estimates and to face that competition in order to protect a Canadian industry. And this is a further example of a lack of courage as in so many other fields. The member for Beauce (Mr. Caron) is aware of that. There are milk producers in his riding who are not happy, Mr. Speaker.

I am anxious to see the member for Beauce rise in his place and have the courage to condemn the lack of adequate measures in order to save the milk industry not only in Quebec but throughout the country.

● (2207)

There is again some talk about importing butter. Mr. Speaker, such things compel us to take the floor and ask the government to show some understanding. At the very moment I am speaking to you, I am quite convinced that in the riding of Beauce as in other ridings, the situation is the same for milk producers. The member for Beauce, Mr. Speaker, prefers to promise a federal penitentiary in his riding by 1979, but it will apparently only take place in 1989. Anyway, due to the present economic situation, there are many milk producers in my riding who have reached their quota and who don't know what to do until the month of April, yet the government refuses to listen to them. Indeed, it is going to let them down. From 5,000 to 6,000 of them have already given up a couple of years ago. Many more will give up as well, Mr. Speaker, but that does not bother the government in the least.

I had an opportunity to speak with the chairman of the Canadian Milk Board and to the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Whelan). Next April, the government will see what it will do, but until then, no doubt some milk producers from Ontario will be forced out of business. There are not enough unemployed as it is. That is the position: one of denial. Some people find the situation amusing. The member for Montreal-Bourassa (Mr. Trudel) may find that funny, but when the Liberals run out of milk or food, and when their stomachs ache from hunger, Mr. Speaker, maybe they will understand how important it is to give the producers a decent income.

Mr. Blais: I rise on a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

[Mr. La Salle.]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. The Postmaster General on a point of order.

Mr. Blais: I am quite aware that the hon. gentleman has not much expertise in the field of agriculture and that he likes to deal with it in a rather general way, but could he tell us, since we are studying Bill C-11, if any clause of this bill allows him to refer to all those matters?

Mr. La Salle: Mr. Speaker, this bill contains some provisions aimed at re-stabilizing or restoring Canada's economy. I am referring to a deficiency in this bill—

An hon. Member: Ah!

Mr. La Salle: No, they don't care. I would have to accept the funds offered by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Chrétien) and completely disregard a very important area from an economic point of view for my riding and for the Canadian agriculture.

● (2212)

The Postmaster General (Mr. Blais) is not interested in that. But that is not possible, for I know the Postmaster General too well to believe he is not interested in such an important sector for the agricultural economy of our country. I denounce, I deplore and I regret this absence of sufficient funds that the Minister of Finance could have presented to the House, as I am speaking of the urgency of the present situation for our milk producers. I wish our members from Quebec would say as much about it, that they would say a little more. Mr. Speaker, in my riding, for example, we had trouble in a textile manufacture. There have been small problems in the riding of Berthier as well.

The Minister of Finance has mentioned it quite often, and recently he was applauded because he presented a proposition last fall which could perhaps save the 200,000 people left. However, the 600,000 workers who had to leave this industry in the last few years are not to be mentioned. That is not mentioned. The 200,000 workers left may be saved, but that is not sure by any means.

Mr. Olivier: Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member for Longueuil on a point of order.

Mr. Olivier: Mr. Speaker, I am sorry for interrupting the hon. member for Joliette but I think the House should not be misled. First he just said that about 600,000 people left their farms. Second, he says the government has never done anything, but if he considers what has been proposed by the government, he will see we are talking about something like \$600 million.

But the people from Montreal, as the member mentioned it, are paying for the people whom he defends now. He should not ignore it—