

Supply

imagination anyone could say that agriculture was not on the table.

It is obvious that agriculture was discussed. As one out of every three hogs produced in Canada is sold in the United States, agriculture must obviously be included in any trade negotiations with our neighbours to the south. It is obvious! I therefore believe that we have kept our commitments in this regard by maintaining our marketing boards. We shall be reviewing this whole sector and if there are any difficulties in the future because of the lower tariffs, we shall certainly deal with them. The various national and provincial federations have already begun consultations with us. My colleague the Minister of Agriculture and myself met the Dairy Farmers of Canada last week. We simply discussed the situation calmly, contrary to what we have seen here these last few weeks. I believe that, together, we can continue to build a healthy agricultural sector in Canada, maintain our existing markets and increase them in the United States, which will benefit all Canadians.

This is a historic agreement. Because of our commitment to Canadian farmers, we have no right to reject it and we have no right to let all kinds of false and even mendacious reports go unchallenged. All sorts of things have been said; for instance, that we might lose 80 per cent of our poultry production. This is pure fantasy.

We have kept our import quotas in that sector at the same level as in the last five years. Generally speaking, we have kept our commitments.

You in the Opposition should join with us to ensure that Canada will—

Mr. Boudria: I can rise on a point of order if you wish.

Mr. Blais: —you still have comments to make. The Hon. Member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell (Mr. Boudria) could perhaps—

An Hon. Member: You should rise on a point of order.

Mr. Blais: Madam Speaker, I would like to conclude—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): The Hon. Member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell (Mr. Boudria).

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise on a point of order to invite the Minister not to address the members of the opposition as “you”. I would like to remind the House, as I am sure that you wanted to do yourself, Madam Speaker, that only the Chair can be addressed as “you”. I was not going to raise this point, but I was urged to do it and I am happy to comply.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): The message is clear and the Hon. Minister of State for Agriculture (Mr. Blais) may now conclude.

Mr. Blais: Madam Speaker, I shall simply conclude by saying that I believe this historic agreement to be good for Canada and for Canadian farm producers. We have no choice. We owe it to our farm producers and to the Canadian population to support this agreement. It is a historic agreement and we should stop playing petty political games. I believe that we should now cooperate to help the 25 million Canadians who deserve this agreement.

Mr. Steven W. Langdon (Essex—Windsor): Madam Speaker, it is very interesting to hear the Minister. He spoke about many farm groups, but not about the Quebec group, the *Union des producteurs agricoles*. In fact, the UPA has decided that this is a bad agreement and that it does not do much for farmers.

I also believe that many of the things that the Minister said show why this group, which represents all Quebec farmers, decided to be part of the coalition against free trade in our country. For instance, the Minister talked about access to the United States market. But when we examine the agreement itself, we find it does not provide for the sure access the Government mentioned earlier. That is one thing.

• (1700)

Second, the Minister spoke about fruits and vegetables. The changes the agreement brings for fruit and vegetable growers create enormous problems for them. The Minister spoke of a protection system that might exist. But it will not longer be there if competition between Canada and the United States is removed, as we see now. The competition will exist and will continue without duties, a very precarious situation for Quebec farmers.

That is why that group speaking on behalf of all Quebec farmers declared this is a bad agreement.

[*English*]

The Hon. Minister has talked about pork producers—of which there are many in Essex County—gaining tremendously from this agreement. In fact, as the Minister knows, pork producers will continue to face the present countervail duty. They will also face the possibility of future countervail decisions. There is no possibility of avoiding that. Appeals against any future countervails will consider U.S. law only.

From my reading of the agreement it certainly seems that the United States Government is only committed to using its “best efforts” to prevent the States individually from taking actions which are against the arrangement itself. In short, it will still be possible for any individual American state to take action against any of our agricultural exports, including pork about which the Minister spoke. I ask the Minister to comment on that and the other points which I have raised.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Blais: Madam Speaker, I can see there will be a sharp decline in the extent of the knowledge my colleague, and particularly his Party, have of Quebec. Yesterday they lost the