

Canadian agriculture covers several products, several agricultural regions, and several different conditions. In fact, it has to be one of the most diversified sectors we can think of, so much so that we will have to come up with an innovative approach if we want our programs to be effective.

As we have said on many occasions, Mr. Speaker, our farm producers are up against a country-wide problem which calls for a fair solution on a national scale. The Minister of Agriculture is now holding a series of consultations with the leaders of Canada's major farm organizations and with his provincial counterparts. In weeks to come I will be meeting with farmers in my riding of Argenteuil—Papineau to discuss the future of family farming operations. Providing fair and effective assistance is not something which can be accomplished overnight, and the Minister of Agriculture stands ready to devote a little more time to meet and consult with major interest groups before taking action. He simply wants to offer the best program available and we share his enthusiasm in this respect.

Mr. Speaker, our commitment is unmistakable: we will intervene to help the farming community, and we will do so as soon as possible. We have no intention of slashing into existing programs to come up with this additional help. We will find the money without adding to the tax burden, and this help will be in addition to the funds already set aside for Canadian agriculture. This process will result in a national program that is fair and will give farmers the help they so badly need. It is the kind of measures to which the Government was referring in the Speech from the Throne when it undertook to spare no efforts to help Canadian farmers. And our farmers know we are supporting them. We have always done so in the past and we will continue to do so now.

[English]

Mr. McDermid: Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate the Hon. Member on her very fine speech. I think it points out again that the Government is the friend of agriculture and knows agriculture inside out. There are many people in our caucus who are active in agriculture and represent the Government well.

● (1630)

I want to point out to the House that when I requested from the Liberal House Leader their policy on trade, what was presented to me by the—

Some Hon. Members: Order.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Order, please.

Mr. Oberle: He can make a comment.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Order, please. The Hon. Member is now commenting on a speech made prior to the speech of the Hon. Member who just spoke. I hope he will comment on that speech only.

Supply

Mr. McDermid: Mr. Speaker, I understand that this period of time is for questions and comments.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Would the Hon. Parliamentary Secretary please take his seat? I think he is well aware that when he rises for questions and comments, the questions and comments are to be on the speech of the Hon. Member who has just finished speaking, not on any previous speech. I hope Hon. Members will take that as notice.

Mr. McDermid: Mr. Speaker, does my colleague believe that a brochure outlining Liberal policy on trade would be a "transcript of a televised address by the Right Hon. John N. Turner on the free trade initiative of the Mulroney Government", dated Ottawa, June 16, 1986, in which he criticizes the Government but in which there is not one word of policy which is supposed to be the Liberal policy on free trade? Does the Hon. Member think that the Canadian people are that gullible?

[Translation]

Mrs. Bourgault: Mr. Speaker, of course I can hardly be expected to know the Liberals' policy on external trade since they don't have one.

The Hon. Member's question is quite apt, because today we are considering an Opposition motion that says the Government has done nothing to deal with the problem. I will restrict my comments to paragraph 3 and the U.S. Farm Bill, Mr. Speaker, since it was the subject of my speech.

The Government has taken this matter very seriously, and I can tell you that our Canadian grain growers, for instance, have been affected by the drop in world prices caused by the EEC's policy, while EEC producers have been shielded from these effects by their subsidies.

Mr. Speaker, Canada cannot tell the European Parliament what to do. Canada cannot intervene, because agriculture is not part of the GATT.

So, I would like to know—I think it has been pretty obvious ever since we came to Parliament, Mr. Speaker, that on the other side of the House, they may be criticizing the Government but, on the other hand, it is easy to criticize the other party when one has nothing to say. What kind of policy do they have on trade? We have no idea.

The Hon. Member who is the free-trade spokesman for the Liberal Party has a position that is entirely different from that of his leader, and every Member of the Official Opposition who rises in the House has a different opinion. Clearly, I cannot be expected to know their thoughts on the matter because they don't have any.

[English]

Mr. Althouse: Mr. Speaker, in her remarks, the Hon. Member indicated that the Conservative Government recognized the damage being done by the U.S. Farm Bill to Canadian grain producers. This damage was estimated by the prairie pools at \$2 billion for wheat and barley, an additional