

Supply

greater than what it exports. Clearly Canada is a major market for Quebec produce. Over one-third of the total production of Quebec agriculture is sold within Canada. Much more of that is consumed within the province. Canada is a major consumer of Quebec products.

The federal government today has 1,400 employees engaged in Quebec assisting with agriculture. By reducing subsidies, and I believe this is the essence of the motion before us, we will increase flexibility within the agricultural sector.

This is what the members of the Bloc have been arguing for over the last year; reduce grain subsidies, reduce transportation subsidies to the west. That is what we have done. The Bloc today should be rejoicing rather than having motions of this type complaining about the fact that it has happened now.

By reducing subsidies we are giving farmers the ability to be more innovative, to produce value added crops in Canada. Why do we ship raw materials all over the world while other people ship us finished goods? This is something Quebec and western farmers, indeed all farmers in Canada, have to address.

The farmers in my riding have not complained about the 30 per cent reduction in the subsidies for industrial milk production. They do not like it but they understand it and they are less concerned about it. When the budget came down they told me to make sure the negotiated stand by the government for them under GATT is maintained.

In 1993 Quebec's agri-food industry reached \$1.2 billion, 9 per cent of the total Canadian market proceeds. In the last 12 years Quebec farm income has risen 67 per cent. Quebec farmers have the highest per capita income of all farmers in Canada. Here they are complaining about agriculture. It seems odd to me.

• (1230)

Let us get back to discussing co-operative federalism and why this is a shared jurisdiction. The report by the Government of Quebec only last year showed that the two levels of government work well together. This was its concluding remarks. Overlap and duplication are minimal, estimated to be less than 1 per cent of combined federal-provincial spending.

In July 1994 the federal and provincial agriculture ministers reaffirmed their commitment to work together to ensure that agricultural exports in Canada will reach \$2 billion by the year 2000. Canada at one time had 3.5 per cent of the entire global agricultural trade. This has slipped over the last two years. This joint federal and provincial task force has reset those goals to take Canada back into the area of 3.5 per cent of global agricultural trade. A federal-provincial development council has been established in order to reach these goals.

This creates one single window of opportunity so that all aspects of agriculture in Canada will be able to market their

programs internationally. Indeed the federal government has donated and committed 50 full time federal employees to attempt to penetrate 150 foreign markets throughout the world.

In summary, by continuing to co-operate federally and provincially to solve the problems of agriculture, to work on our research budgets, hopefully not meaner, but leaner and more effectively, will make Canada a world leader in agricultural product marketing. It will also make for a more efficient industry within our borders.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in his speech, the hon. member mentioned one item which I find very relevant. He wondered why we are so dependent on imports and why some regions in Canada are not self-sufficient.

In this regard, he shares the view of the Canadian Sheep Foundation which claims: "The Canadian government is abandoning without any reason a production in full expansion". How can the hon. member explain his government's decision to discontinue its research and development assistance to an industry whose self-sufficiency, throughout Canada, has gone from 23 to 45 per cent since 1976? Why are we informing the sheep industry that we are abandoning our research and development efforts, that we intend to rely even more, if possible, on imports?

How can the minister justify such a decision? We are not talking about protecting the Quebec market only, but about the conclusions of the Canadian Sheep Foundation, which is astounded by the decision.

My other question to the hon. member relates to shared jurisdiction. How can he explain that, in La Pocatière, where an agricultural technology institute run by the Quebec government and a federally-funded experimental farm are located, we are closing the farm without even informing the Quebec government, without proposing any other use for the buildings? Is that not another example of the major negative impact of shared jurisdictions such as the one that exists in agriculture?

[*English*]

Mr. Shepherd: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question regarding the closure of one of these facilities.

Of course it has been necessary to rationalize research facilities throughout Canada. This is not just in agriculture. It deals with industry. It deals with technology. In all kinds of aspects we have had to wonder whether we need bricks and mortars in different parts of the country.

Technology and research do not necessarily need a building. I notice that much of our technology can be done out of people's houses these days. Whether we have bricks and mortars in Quebec or bricks and mortars in Manitoba is somewhat irrelevant to say the least. I note also that the agricultural facility here