

Customs Tariff—Excise Tax Act

lost a fair amount of faith as a result of this particular approach.

● (9:50 p.m.)

The previous speaker suggested some of the other members of the committee might bear out what he said about certain equipment being used for applying fertilizer. I think he was referring to the day when an Ontario farmer was describing his difficulties in the field of fertilizer application. I was informed, and I think my informants were reliable, that Ontario farmers were going to the United States and trucking fertilizer back in order to save themselves some money. You can go into western Canada, where I farm, and see the very close relationships that exist between the suppliers of various fertilizers. This leads you to the inescapable conclusion that at some place along the line, either tacitly or openly, some agreement or understanding has been reached on the price at which fertilizers of various classification will be offered to the farmer; there is agreement about the price he will pay for it. For that reason I cannot stand here and shout great hurrahs because of some changes that are proposed.

We read of concessions being given to manufacturers in the east and of the adjustments they are supposed to make to the new, lower rates. All this may mean that there may be some adjustments. But when you look at the continuing increase in the cost of living and the continuing cost of inputs or business costs of farmers, wholesalers and retailers in the area where I live, I am afraid I must say—unless I am shown otherwise—that these adjustments are not filtering down to us; they are not getting through.

The other part of the Kennedy Round which has been little less than disastrous to western farmers is that having to do with grain negotiations. I include the negotiations with respect to cereals. This was the first time that cereals had been brought into the negotiations under the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade. Some of us thought, rather naïvely, that this would make it easier for us to go to the market, that it would enlarge markets and we would be better off. But that did not happen; instead, our markets are contracting. We negotiated prices under the Kennedy Round, but those prices have not been followed. Canadian officials have gone to meetings in Europe and the United States to discuss prices and the agreement we made. They went there, in so many words, to plead

[Mr. Gleave.]

with the people on the other side of the table to abide by an agreement to which nations had affixed their signature.

I recall a minister saying just a day or so ago that he was hopeful that the plateau in prices which has been reached would hold. What kind of agreement is the Kennedy Round? Why is it that we and other nations feel bound to adhere to one area of the negotiations but not to adhere to and maintain that part which concerns wheat prices? Why do other nations not feel bound to maintain the price for wheat that they agreed to under that agreement? I wonder why we, as Canadians, are putting so much faith in the Kennedy Round? I wonder why we think it will help us be more commercially effective than we have been up to now? We have attempted to stabilize the market for our products, but we have been less than successful. I suspect that tariffs and juggling with tariffs is not the answer to our problems. I think it is about time we looked at our situation, at least in so far as it affects the farming sector of Canada, and considered how we might improve it by bargaining face-to-face with some of the nations which are prepared to purchase our products and do business with us in a straightforward fashion. I believe we have pretty well come to that point, because the Kennedy Round simply has not accomplished the type of agreement, the type of good will and the type of understanding and expanded trade among nations which it was supposed to accomplish. I think we may as well face that fact and go on from there.

PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 40 deemed to have been moved.

INFORMATION—RETRAINING PROGRAM—LACK OF KNOWLEDGE BY FARMERS

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton-Melville): Mr. Speaker, on November 6 I addressed a question to the Minister of Manpower and Immigration (Mr. MacEachen) about the Task Force on Government Information. I asked, as reported at page 591 of *Hansard*, the following question:

In view of the fact that the report of the task force on government information revealed that approximately 40 per cent of Canadian farmers