

Adjournment Debate

First, the Minister seems to feel that while our total beef imports may have changed as to their country of origin, the general total level of imports had not increased and was not excessive. This is certainly not the case. Our traditional imports from Australia and New Zealand have dropped somewhat, it is true, but this drop off has been replaced with huge amounts from the Common Market, all with export subsidies.

The second item that needs comment and correction is that the Minister seems to have been advised that Canada's global import quota of 145.1 million pounds will not be filled during the 1984 calendar year. Therefore, there should be no serious reason for our Canadian concerns. This is certainly not the case. The Canadian Cattlemen's Association has monitored these imports from all countries very carefully. The Association does this year by year. It is a very good source of information on this type of statistic. The Canadian Cattlemen's Association has always done this as a service for Canada's beef cattle producers and the total industry.

The CCA's considered opinion is that our global quota could be filled as early as August or September of this year, after which we can expect our live cow prices to drop rather sharply as a result of being forced onto the United States market in larger and larger numbers at that time of year. It is important to note that I think the Minister has the best of intentions. That was obvious to me when we had our private conversation. I think, however, he has not been properly advised, at least along those two lines. Admittedly it is difficult to keep on top of the pounds of imported beef coming into Canada. But this can be done. The Canadian Cattlemen's Association over the years has done a superb job of monitoring the numbers. Most of the figures come from the Government of Canada, from Statistics Canada. It is a matter of the Minister taking the time to assess the total situation and get a variety of expert opinions. That is available.

Mr. W. Kenneth Robinson (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Revenue): Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member for Medicine Hat (Mr. Hargrave) does make some very telling points. It is accurate to state that imports of beef into Canada have increased greatly when measured on a year over year basis. The information I have indicates that imports from all sources during the first four months of this year were 45.2 million pounds compared with 36.7 million pounds during the same months last year.

The Government shares the Canadian Cattlemen's concern about the rapid increase of subsidized beef imports into Canada from the European community. Since the beginning of the year, officials of the Department of External Affairs, in consultation with those from other Departments, have been monitoring and evaluating the situation closely in view of the potential destabilizing effect such imports could have on Canadian markets and trade patterns.

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Strong representations have been made to the European Economic Community, urging it to cease the undercutting of the Canadian market. Canadian representatives to the GATT

have also raised the issue. Although Canada has not received a formal response, I am informed that on May 12, 1984, the European Community reduced its export refund by 6.6 per cent. This is welcome, but the European Economic Community needs to do more. Canadian officials shall be raising this issue again with the European Economic Community next week on June 7 and June 8 in the regular review of Canada-European Economic Community problems.

Moreover, I believe that the Canadian Cattlemen's Association is preparing a submission requesting the application of countervailing duties on imports of Irish beef products. This submission will provide the Government the opportunity to evaluate if the industry is suffering injury due to these imports. Should this prove to be the case, appropriate action, consistent with Canadian law and our GATT obligations, will be taken.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY—MACDONALD COMMISSION'S APPROACH TO CHALLENGE OF TECHNOLOGY. (B) GOVERNMENT INVESTMENT IN RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Thomas Siddon (Richmond-South Delta): Mr. Speaker, I welcome this opportunity to elaborate upon the questions which I asked on April 17 in the House of the Minister of State for Science and Technology (Mr. Johnston), as reported at page 3136 of *Hansard*. At that time I was disturbed by the interim report of the Macdonald Commission which failed to recognize the importance of the new technologies that are now transforming global economies from one end of the planet to another. This represents a significant challenge to Canada. I must clarify that I am talking about the challenge to use technology to increase the wealth and income to be extracted from our traditional strong suits—our resource-based industries and our manufacturing enterprises. I am not just talking about high technology or micro-electronics in a narrow sense, but the equalization process which is under way in the world and the transformation of the economies of all nations this challenge is presenting.

I expressed my concern about the report of the Macdonald Commission entitled "Challenges and Choices" which left the impression that Canada perhaps had a choice as to whether or not it should increase its commitment to technological advancement, as if we could stand idly by and watch these rapid transformations occurring throughout the world and not become involved by way of a major change or shift in the priorities of our nation and of the federal Government, particularly.

The approach taken by the Macdonald Commission, in not coming up with specific proposals or a categorical position on the issue, not only flies in the face of the facts as they reveal themselves around the world but seems contrary to the submission of the Minister of State for Science and Technology to the Macdonald Commission last October, wherein he included a call for a major increase in Canada's commitment to research and development. At that time he stated that the Government's target would be 1.5 per cent of Gross National Product being invested in research and development by 1985.