

Agriculture

Mr. Speaker, the government intends to keep on helping farmers to compete on international markets in an objective and competent way. Farmers are naturally anxious to make as much as possible of the rather privileged situation they are in with regard to several agricultural products.

I add that the Canadian Dairy Commission is always on the lookout for export markets. When the United States asked for 25 million pounds of skim milk powder, the Canadian Dairy Commission was the first one to act and immediately call for tenders. We made every effort to get that market.

Indeed, half of the American demand was met by Canada from the Commission's supplies and those currently available for trade, at an internationally competitive price.

That is the kind of quick action that a national marketing board can take, and it is another good reason for those who are against such board to reflect on their ability to co-ordinate the efforts for increased exports.

We want the Canadian Dairy Commission to be the best of its kind in the world. This is a considerable objective, but we accept the challenge and will do our best to meet it.

The Department of Agriculture of Canada is co-operating with provincial representatives in order to develop a better and more complete facilities inspection program.

The federal government has accomplished a lot of work on the sidelines to develop today's new markets. As regards the livestock industry, we have established a new classification system; we have developed an importation program under which we can use the best producing subjects in the world to improve our stock; we have programs to test qualifications; we have opened new markets for livestock and sperms by means of commercial agreements like the one which was recently signed with Australia.

We also offer cash subsidies to farmers who increase their fodder production. But the federal government has not solved all the problems, and it cannot do so.

We have taken a dynamic position as regards the marketing of grain, including fodder. We have rejuvenated our quota system to improve our marketing. We have introduced new and better plant varieties. We have improved our transportation system to such a point that our exports are at an all-time high.

Those are all worthy achievements that helped to improve the farmers' lot, and it is only a beginning. To rest on our laurels is absolutely out of the question. On the contrary, we are determined to keep on working even harder since we foresee other great possibilities.

But I am convinced that Canadian farmers deserve 100 per cent of our efforts. I know we shall have to be perseverant if we want to secure and enlarge our domestic and foreign markets for the benefit of Canadian farmers.

● (1650)

In another field, Mr. Speaker, we established an inter-departmental committee that will study proteins.

I believe we have reached a point where we cannot afford any more to live under a system that frustrates forward-looking individuals and organizations with the

[Mr. Corriveau.]

drive and the technical knowledge required to develop new products and open new markets for our farm products.

We reduced the income tax rate, and the biggest cuts benefited lower income groups.

We have reduced the customs tariffs on many items bought by farmers, including hardware and draining material.

We have reduced the customs tariffs on several food products, but we also warned farmers that we would be ready to restore them if the production of a particular product were threatened in the future.

We increased the direct subsidy for feed transportation to eastern Canada and British Columbia so as to maintain a healthy livestock industry in those areas.

We also changed the regulations concerning the export of foreign cattle with the establishment of quarantine stations, and that has created new outlets for our cattlemen.

Those are decisions already made and announced. We did even better, on the 1st of August, we introduced a new feed grain policy. The grain sector goes hand in hand with breeding, and those two branches of agriculture have bright prospects for development. The feed grain policy will be essential to the future of agriculture throughout Canada.

We have already provided the provinces with the Small Farm Development Program, which aims at helping directly the small farmers improve their future. Some provinces have already adhered to this formula of federal assistance.

We have not dared intrude in farm product marketing. We have been satisfied with passing an act which permits provinces to co-operate in the marketing process, in order to prevent a state of chaos from developing in the sale of farm products at the national level. During the past two years, the opposition used a smoke screen to prevent the establishment of national marketing agencies for farm products. Hon. members of the opposition may find it advantageous to consult and agree on a policy. We, the members of this Liberal government, know what we want and have made it known.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel): Order, please. I must regretfully interrupt the hon. member, but his time has expired.

PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

[Translation]

SUBJECT MATTER OF QUESTIONS TO BE DEBATED

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel): It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 40, to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: