

want free market forces. Leave us alone, they say. Yet every time the Americans shut the border down on them or when the cattle industry is in real trouble and feedlots all over western Canada are going broke, who are the first ones down in Ottawa with their hands out? Those same guys who want free market forces. They want the free and open market when the prices are good but when prices are bad they come to Ottawa. That is why I do not take much of what the Canadian Cattlemen's Association says with anything more than grain of salt, and never have. These are the fellows who operate their big ranches with what I call the Texas cowboy syndrome, the free, independent spirit, waltzing around in their saddles. However, more livestock is produced by small farmers who are not members of the Canadian Cattlemen's Association than by the entire Canadian Cattlemen's Association. One questions who the devil they speak for besides the packing industry and their own selfish little kingdom.

• (1750)

It is okay for businessmen selling a product to set their price based on their cost of production, their cost of capital, and a return on investment on which they can live, and sometimes they even include their own wage. Why can a farmer not do that? The farm sector is still the only sector in our economy which has to be a price taker rather than a price maker. A working person in a union can bargain and negotiate his pay and ends up being a pay taker and a pay maker. The business community, doctors, lawyers, dentists, architects and chartered accountants can all set a price which covers their costs, a return on their capital investment, and a living. Why is that not possible for farmers?

That double standard in our economy has decimated the agriculture industry. Name me another sector which is more efficient and has diversified more than our agricultural producers. I defy anyone to do so. Their efficiency has been their downfall. They have diversified themselves into bankruptcy. They are entitled to a parity price on agricultural products produced in Canada for human consumption. If that means increased food costs for poor people they can be compensated directly through a tax credit, food stamps, or a variety of other programs. Why should the Canadian agricultural producer bear the cost of a cheap food policy and go broke?

The Progressive Conservative Party, the Liberal Party and the New Democratic Party have supported the principle of parity prices in this limited manner for quite a few years. The House passed this legislation in 1984 and 1985. I urge my good friends across the way to talk to their colleague, the Member for Edmonton West, about parity prices. I urge the House to continue the debate on this matter which would bring about fair play for our agricultural producers in this very limited manner. At least 20 per cent of their production in a general average across Canada would get a fair price.

Surely if my good friends opposite want to adhere to the statements of the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) about

Parity Prices for Farm Products Act

fairness, nothing could be more fair than this, albeit in a limited manner. We can do no less in this Parliament. I urge this House to do so.

May I call it six o'clock, Mr. Speaker? I have had a hard day.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Malépart: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Hon. Member for Montreal—Sainte-Marie (Mr. Malépart) has already taken part in the debate.

Mr. Malépart: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Hon. Member for Montreal—Sainte-Marie (Mr. Malépart) is always right. He has the floor on debate.

Mr. Malépart: I am happy to hear you say I am always right, Mr. Speaker. I hope my Conservative colleagues will remember that famous statement of yours.

Mr. Gérin: Just wasting time.

Mr. Malépart: Mr. Speaker, it is important to realize, and that proves the Hon. Member for Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead (Mr. Gérin)—as the Hon. Member for Champlain (Mr. Champagne) would say: the balance—is not a good lawyer. He does not even know the provisions of the Standing Orders, what Bill we are debating now. This Bill is not to be debated during just one hour of Private Members' Business but may receive five hours of consideration. The debate must go on, Mr. Speaker.

Besides, the attitude of the Hon. Member for Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead and that of the Hon. Member for Champlain leave no doubt as to why the Conservative government is badly represented and the people—

The Hon. Member for Champlain tried to outsmart and manipulate the House of Commons through Standing Orders he does not even know.

Let us go back to the matter under consideration, agriculture, which is far more important than the procedural debate the Hon. Member for Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead and the Hon. Member for Champlain wanted to start.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Hon. Member for Champlain (Mr. Champagne) on a point of order.

Mr. Champagne (Champlain): Mr. Speaker, talking about manipulation, we have an expert at this on the other side, the Hon. Member for Montreal—Sainte-Marie (Mr. Malépart). I can tell you one thing, Mr. Speaker; when we made the arrangement, the Hon. Member for Bourassa (Mr. Rossi), my colleague from the New Democratic Party, and my colleague for Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead were there. The four of