

Supply

I see that there are not many members across the way. They may not come from another planet, but I do not know where they come from.

People have been hit very hard by the budget. My colleague from Frontenac said earlier that none of the farmers he has spoken to was happy with the budget.

They claim that the budget is acceptable, that it is a good budget. I do not understand where these members come from.

An hon. member: From Ontario.

• (1550)

Mr. Canuel: It is impossible to pay too much attention to agriculture, and especially to young farmers. A nation that is not self-sufficient in agriculture must be considered part of the third world. A country that does not give top priority to agriculture does not understand anything.

When game became scarce, mankind turned to farming to survive. Nothing has since replaced the food taken from the land. However, in order to grow this food, farmers must work hard, invest money and take risks. Farmers do face great risks, as they have done for generations. They are willing to assume terrible risks.

These people have attained sovereignty on their land. They own their land. They sow their fields with whatever grains they please. They breed whatever animals they please. Their work does not bind them to a fixed schedule, but one thing is sure, they have put in an incredible number of hours. They are ready for a country of their own.

According to a poll commissioned by the UPA, the results of which were released on November 22, 1990, at the Bélanger-Campeau Commission, 73 per cent of farmers were in favour of sovereignty—association, 73 per cent.

On September 2, in the middle of the election campaign in Quebec, the president of the UPA, Laurent Pellerin, argued in the presence of Premier Daniel Johnson that there is not much more to fear from sovereignty than from the current situation, what we have gone through over poultry and continue to go through every day in our trade relations. That is what the president of the UPA said.

Indeed, farm producers have met great challenges over the years, moving from traditional to industrial farming, facing international competition, computerizing their businesses, learning new production techniques and keeping up with all the new advanced technologies. They are ready to take up the new and great challenge of becoming the kings in their own castles, masters of their own houses, in other words, sovereign.

To those who claim that, in a sovereign Quebec, agriculture would be profoundly disrupted, our producers reply that the future of Quebec's industry is conditioned much more by market development than by the advent of a sovereign Quebec.

Those who think farm producers from the rest of Canada are unlikely to go for maintaining supply management are wrong. We all know that, to maintain the revenues of all dairy producers, each province must preserve the supply management system.

We doubt that it would be in the interests of the rest of Canada, particularly Ontario and the Maritimes, to eliminate the supply management system, which is still the only adequate income security system for farmers. Should that system be eliminated, markets would open up and, to be sure, the rest of Canada would be the biggest loser.

Allow me to digress for a moment. It is difficult in Quebec, particularly in my region, to talk about agriculture without referring to forestry. Most of our farmers have some woodland on their farm. In many cases, if used properly, that woodland can provide a supplementary income which can sometimes be relatively substantial.

Again, the federal government will hurt these farmers. The Eastern Quebec Development Plan, which was to be renewed for three years, was only extended for one year.

• (1555)

This will result in a shortfall of more than \$13 million over a two-year period. The federal-provincial agreement, which will end in 1996, is also in bad shape. As you know, these federal-provincial agreements have been in place for 25 years and their continued existence is now uncertain, unfortunately. Foresters and farmers are very concerned.

Investing in agriculture is an obligation, while investing in forestry is a necessity. It is a plus, an investment. It is not a donation. The ministers of agriculture and natural resources are yielding to the finance minister who, in turn, yields to the multinationals. The problem is: who governs the country? It is the multinationals. Occasionally, the Minister of Finance will give his opinion, but it is just an opinion. Earlier, some members opposite accused us of being partisan; sure, because we represent our people. We are quite willing to be accused of partisanship because we truly look after the interests of those whom we represent.

What will happen is disturbing, if not downright frightening.

We have a moral obligation to feed ourselves, as well as others, because the Gaspé Peninsula is a vast territory. If we were given the tools to invest in our agricultural land base, we could feed thousands, perhaps millions of people. All we need is a bit of help. As I said earlier, people in our regions are used to