

Supply

Martin budget, especially the cuts in the dairy sector. He should read *La terre de chez nous* and find out what the farmers think about his government, and he will realize they are not very happy.

Why not talk to the farmers he did not meet during the election campaign, because he refused to have a debate? He does not talk about it, he tries to evade the issue, and when Quebec was represented by 74 members, 74 sheep, this attitude did a lot of damage. In concluding, I suggest the hon. member go to Bourque Boulevard. Next Monday, and if he does not know how to get there, I will go with him, he should go to L'Encan Lafaille, to talk to the farmers. Then he might realize what is really going on.

It is all very well to have a bunch of lawyers, but a bunch of farmers defended by farmers is even better. So I would urge the former president of the Quebec Bar Association to take a stand in favour of agriculture.

Mr. Paradis: Mr. Speaker, as concerns going out into the field, I remind my hon. colleague that I have just returned from an electoral campaign during which I met a lot of farmers in Brome-Missisquoi. Afterwards I also met farmers from other regions. I thank the farmers from Brome-Missisquoi for having voted Liberal in the last election. I feel very grateful for the confidence they placed in their humble servant. I thank them sincerely.

I want to go back over the issue of research and development that the official opposition mentioned a few minutes ago. Several Bloc members mentioned R & D in relation to this debate. It would be a good idea to check if the Quebec Minister of Agriculture, a good friend of theirs from their PQ head office, heard what the Bloc members said. In fact, this provincial minister just tabled a budget in the Quebec National Assembly. In the tabled documents, it is mentioned, under "Education, Research and Development", that funding in this area will drop from \$45 million to \$41 million. They are cutting \$4 million from research and development.

The Bloc's friends in the head office cut funding for research and development by \$4 million. We should at the very least send forthwith a copy of Bloc's remarks about research and development to their head office as well as to the Quebec Minister of Agriculture.

[English]

Mr. Alex Shepherd (Durham, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have had some experience with farming. This time of year we would normally be out on the land cultivating. Most of the farmers in Durham are doing just that. I sometimes wonder if they are not better off than I am sitting in the House.

In my riding of Durham one in five jobs is food related; 2.8 per cent of provincial milk production is from farmers in Durham. Our grain sales are over \$10.5 million. We have won worldwide acclaim for livestock and crops. One can see farming is no strange animal to the people of Durham.

One million, eight-hundred thousand Canadians are engaged in the vocation of agriculture. It accounts for 8 per cent of gross domestic product and 15 per cent of the Canadian workforce, clearly a very important industry.

Agriculture is a shared jurisdiction and there are some very good reasons for that. This has occurred from the time of Confederation and continues today. One thing we have in common is we all must eat. Clearly it is very important to produce our agricultural products efficiently, to transport them effectively and to continue Canada's excellent reputation in the export of agricultural products.

• (1225)

I will discuss quickly how in some ways Quebec benefits by this shared jurisdiction. The argument laid out today is that somehow the agricultural sector of Quebec has been subsidizing some other aspect of agriculture within the country.

In 1990, Quebec—these are total government spending and taxation figures—received \$35.1 billion in federal government spending. It paid \$24.5 billion in taxes. Clearly there is no subsidization process here. This is just a trick with numbers taking one aspect of that spending and taxation system and expanding it to make a big argument.

Quebec benefits in many other ways. In the GATT negotiation our government argued very strongly and very effectively to protect our supply managed industries. High tariff walls will prevent a quick reduction in commodity prices in Canada. All farmers in Canada have benefited but certainly the people in Durham, a large dairy farming area, have expressed their appreciation for what the Government of Canada did for them. I am sure Quebec dairy farmers feel similarly.

When the supply management system was established in Canada, of the industrial milk quota, Quebec had 48 per cent of the industrial milk production. That is what is owned currently by Quebec farmers.

In research and development, and we have touched very briefly on that subject, I have an interesting quote from the member for Quebec East, the agricultural critic of the Bloc: "There is no doubt that with regard to research Quebec is not unfairly treated at agriculture Canada". Clearly even the Bloc has recognized it is not unfairly treated within our federation.

The federal government spends approximately \$360 million in Quebec in the area of agriculture. Quebec's agricultural production which it sells within the country is three times