

Farm Income

Mr. Whelan: People from all over the world come to see what we are doing in our country, and those who are not getting the economic return they should are being told that there are mechanisms for them to use. Those mechanisms are provided by the most democratic institution in the world, the parliament of Canada. If producers want to work together, those mechanisms are available. To those who think that that big country to the south of us is getting ready to be a great liberal trader because of the tremendous pressure which is on its government, I can say that that is not the impression I came away with from Washington yesterday. The United States is willing to lower the tariff on soybeans 60 per cent. That reduces the price 36 cents a bushel, leaving 24 cents a bushel. That still stops me or any farmer producing beans in southern Ontario from taking advantage of the market in Ohio and Michigan.

● (1612)

The other day the price went up to \$7. To buy \$7 beans in the U.S., you have to add 84 cents because of our devalued money. Did the trade pay our own producers that here in Canada? No, I can tell hon. members they did not do that. They cheated them out of over 90 cents a bushel. When they were buying American beans for nearly \$7 in U.S. funds, they were paying \$6.65 in Canadian funds for beans in Canada. If I had the same advantage as the buyer or processor had to go to Ohio, Michigan or Chicago to buy or sell my beans over there, I would be in a much better position because I could have loaded up with duty free fertilizer from Ohio or potash from Saskatchewan and brought it back in my big truck—if I had a big truck. I do not have a big truck because I am Minister of Agriculture.

I am just pointing out our disadvantages, and the advantages which the processors have over us. The United States does not intend to wipe out the 60 cents a bushel soybean tariff because the law only allows them to go down to 60 per cent. They cannot lower it below 60 per cent because the law does not allow it. Can you imagine a brave senator or congressman giving the administration the right to wipe out 100 per cent of the tariff? I cannot imagine that after yesterday. I could not imagine it before when I criticized the U.S. ambassador for running around and talking about liberalized trade. Tom Enders knows what their laws are, he knows how far they can go, and he knows they cannot go as far as we can because we are the freest agricultural trading nation in the world. We have been successful at that.

The hon. member for Brant referred to 1 per cent. I think it shows that industry is protected about 14 per cent and agriculture about 6.5 per cent or 7 per cent. We do not protect with tariffs any of the products that come into Canada that are high in price. I am talking about such products as coffee, spices and all these other products we import into Canada. We do not protect them with any significant tariff, and practically all of them are duty free. Many other countries do not do that. They look at that as revenue with which to offset some of their other costs of production. We have import controls on many

[Mr. Whelan.]

products, and many people in western Canada think they are free traders. I do not know.

I see here the hon. member who used to be head of the grain commission in Canada, a very knowledgeable person. He knows there have not been free traders since 1935 when R. B. Bennett imposed the Wheat Board on the people of Canada because of the horrible system of marketing grain in western Canada. I cannot even bring a bushel of wheat into Canada—and I approve of the system—to do research as Minister of Agriculture unless I obtain a permit. That applies to any of the grains under the Canadian Wheat Board. No matter what the world price might be, whether it is cheap or expensive—and not many people will want to bring it in if it is expensive—you cannot bring those grains into Canada under that system.

With regard to the Canadian Dairy Commission, opposition members say we have done nothing. We had no quotas on cheese before the Minister of Agriculture placed a 50 million pound quota on special cheeses coming into Canada. All the dairy producers in the dairy processing industry heralded that as a breakthrough. It might be of interest to the hon. member for Elgin and his party to know that the 50 million pound quota is not being filled. Cheese consumption has gone up in Canada in two years by about 18 per cent. That 18 per cent is all domestically produced cheese. Am I supposed to go out and pound people's heads and say, "Get into cheese production"?

When the House checks what we have done in the dairy industry they will find that we have increased production of condensed milk by 38 per cent in one year. Why did we do that? That was done under the transfer of fat program. When you have condensed milk on the world market, you do not have butter or skim milk powder; you just take some of the moisture out of milk. It can be added back or used in that form. It is in little cans that can be easily used in thousands of different places in the world. It is in a much better form than skim milk powder. We know that butter cannot be used in many countries, so why produce a product that will be financing the treasuries of other countries?

Advertising has been mentioned. The hon. member knows that the Dairy Commission has received \$4 million. We can give an example of what the marketing boards can do. We can go to Alberta which has some of the strictest provincial marketing boards that I have ever seen. Last year, with the cheap price of beef—there was never a time when the consumer got more beef for an hour's wages—a phenomenal thing took place in Alberta, which has the most expensive poultry in all of Canada. Perhaps it is slightly more expensive in British Columbia, but the producers in Alberta get the best return. Do you know, Mr. Speaker, that consumption of broiler chickens increased in Alberta 10 per cent when the national average was only 2.3 per cent? What does that tell you? The producers themselves sold the chicken.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ethier): I regret to interrupt the minister, but the time allotted to him has expired. He may continue with unanimous consent. Is that agreed?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.