

Adjournment Debate

At the same time, action will continue on ways to remove rules and practices which prevent the free flow of agri-food products within Canada.

This is a result of a memorandum of understanding signed by agriculture ministers on the elimination of interprovincial trade barriers. As you know, Madam Speaker, the premier of my province, Premier McKenna, was one of the leading forces in that elimination of interprovincial trade barriers, and we hope that we are successful in that. There are now about 170 such barriers to interprovincial trade. We talk of free trade and we talk of global trade but we are restricted within our own borders. Priority will be given to establishing a permanent process, including a binding dispute settlement mechanism to address trade barriers on an ongoing basis.

There are many opportunities for Canadian agriculture to diversify. In these times of low grain prices, it is critical that we look at value-added processing for the future prosperity of the agriculture industry. In my province, this is something which we have achieved. Value-added in the province of New Brunswick is in the order now of close to 50 per cent. In some of the western provinces, that figure is presently in the single-digit numbers, and in some provinces it is less than 5 per cent. The problem is quite obvious, it is staring us right in the face. That is why this whole area of value-added and market development is part of the agricultural review policy.

This government is taking a look at the industry and the policies that shape it. Besides marketing and safety net issues, we are looking at transportation, farm finance, management, food safety, supply management and, of course, sustainable agriculture.

Action on each of these programs will proceed at different rates of speed. Results of consultations and analyses will be forthcoming in the year ahead.

What I want to emphasize here is the context to which this motion to amend the WGSA and the ASA is being made. It is clearly not the time to tinker with safety net programs when a major review of them is under way.

The *ad hoc* performances of previous governments will not be tolerated and we are not going to be part of that. Through the review process, solutions to some of the problems or inequities said to exist in Canadian agriculture policy can hopefully be found. Through this process

we can develop the kinds of agricultural programs and policies that will be fair to all producers.

By making fundamental changes to individual programs, we run the risk of creating more problems. Governments will always face problems and they will always face challenges, but when the Canadian people begin to understand what we are attempting to do, I think that will solve some of the difficulties, because farmers and all support people in that industry will support what we are trying to do. That will mean producers, people in the agri-food business, and most of all, as I mentioned before—

• (1800)

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): Order, please. The time for the consideration of Private Members' Business is now expired.

[*Translation*]

Pursuant to Standing Order 93, this item drops to the bottom of the order of precedence on the Order Paper.

PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

[*English*]

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 is deemed to have been moved.

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Vic Althouse (Mackenzie): Madam Speaker, on February 15, I asked the Minister of Finance in this House why it was that he on behalf of his government which was always advising farmers to face up to the market realities, refused to follow his own advice when it came to the value of the Canadian dollar or the interest rates in Canada.

I asked that question because it had just been announced through the press that the Government of Canada and the Minister of Finance had just spent more than \$3 billion U.S. of our foreign exchange reserves trying to prop up the Canadian dollar. The result was that an attempt at reducing interest rates fizzled out. The Canadian dollar dropped more than 2 cents in very short order. The market analysts tell us that apparently the market was afraid of both the lower returns that