

Oral Questions

them and my hon. friend knows full well that to speak of a space agency is to speak of an industry of the future. The same is true of pharmaceutical research and a bill was passed about this. Another industry of the future. Similarly when I talk about good jobs in the petrochemical sector.

So, we are indeed interested in the future of Montreal and we are indeed introducing legislation to enhance its future.

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AGRICULTURE

Mr. Mark Assad (Gatineau—La Lièvre): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Agriculture. To date, all Quebec agriculture ministers have supported the quota policies brought in by the previous government. I have met with the President of the UPA, Mr. Proulx, and the Quebec Department of Agriculture, and we are very interested to know unequivocally from our minister—we want the assurance that you will never drop Article XI of GATT and that you will strengthen more than ever our farmers' right to quotas, the pillar of our agricultural system.

Hon. Pierre Blais (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs and Minister of State (Agriculture)): Mr. Speaker, I am glad to see that my colleague has consulted with the UPA president. My colleague, the Minister of Agriculture and I met Mr. Proulx less than a week ago and spent three hours discussing all the issues affecting Quebec farmers.

I can assure him that if ever a government took an interest in Canadian and Quebec farmers, especially milk producers, it is this one, because we have implemented a long-term dairy policy. We have managed to take to GATT a national position that was supported by all Canadian farmers, whereas the previous government left farmers, especially milk producers, in limbo for five years with no long-term dairy policy—you never brought one in, but we did. We have maintained it. The Prime Minister is committed to having a long-term dairy policy. I can assure you, Mr. Speaker, that Canadian farmers know what we have done for them and we will continue to defend them. Only this government is able to do so.

[English]

Mr. Bob Speller (Haldimand—Norfolk): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary is for the Minister of Agriculture.

Several senior members of our supply managed commodities told us that they have been told by senior Canadian officials that Canada is changing its position at the GATT and is now willing to give up Article XI in order to get an agreement at GATT.

I ask the minister: Will he make a commitment in this House today to stand up for Canadian supply managed farmers and say that he will not sign anything at GATT that undermines Article XI?

Hon. Bill McKnight (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, I suggest to the hon. member in all frankness that whomever he may use as his source is factually incorrect. If they are representing themselves as officials from the Government of Canada, I would very much appreciate the opportunity to speak directly to them.

The Government of Canada has stated, as my colleagues have, its position on Article XI. We are not talking about weakening Article XI. What we have asked for, and what the policy of this government is, is that Article XI should be further clarified and strengthened. That has not been changed and will not change until the government says it will change.

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FISHERIES

Mr. Brian Tobin (Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the minister of employment. The minister is well aware of the devastating failure of the inshore fishery in some regions of Newfoundland and Labrador. Indeed, thousands of fishermen and plant workers in my riding in the Strait of Belle Isle and White Bay on the Baie Verte Peninsula are looking to the government for assistance.

I want to ask the minister of employment, who is a former minister of fisheries and is well aware of the situation in the province today, what measures are being contemplated to assist these inshore fishermen and plant workers and when may we expect some announcement of the government's intentions?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, in fact, the government is well aware of the difficult situation in certain parts of