

Proceedings on Adjournment Motion

hope he will leave me at least the few minutes at my disposal to answer him.

The Royal Commission on Health Services has recommended a ratio of one doctor for about 650 people. In 1968, there was one doctor for 740 people, and now there is one for 683. I hope that the hon. member will note the continuing improvement in that field. The increasing number of graduates in medicine together with the immigrant doctors will surely contribute to improve the situation, and the ratio recommended by the Commission will soon be reached.

In conclusion I would like to say that the efforts of the government are designed not only to alleviate the alleged lack of doctors, but also to improve medical services so that all Canadians receive good care. Indeed, since 1966, the government has already spent \$216,000,000 to meet all those needs.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Boulanger): Order, please. I regret to interrupt the Parliamentary Secretary, but his time has ended.

[*English*]

FRUIT—REQUEST BY BRITISH COLUMBIA GROWERS FOR EXPORT ASSISTANCE—LEGISLATION TO PROTECT AGAINST DUMPING OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS

Mr. Mark Rose (Fraser Valley West): Mr. Speaker, in contrast to the serious national problem posed by the hon. member for Simcoe North (Mr. Rynard) concerning the shortage of doctors in Canada and the effect of this shortage on the nation's health, my intervention tonight, dealing with the problems of the Okanagan apple industry and the strawberry industry in the Fraser Valley, may seem minuscule. However, I put forward my representations to the government on the basis of the old adage that an apple a day keeps the doctor away.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Rose: My intervention tonight comes hard on the heels of the rejection by this House of an amendment put forward by my party designed to include Canadian agricultural exports within the scope of Bill C-262. I know that members of the Official Opposition who are constantly concerned about the problems of Canadian agriculture, and who provide a great deal of flak in connection with this matter, voted against this amendment to include agriculture within the scope of the bill. This is known as a parenthetical aside. Other speakers have spoken on the pre-eminence of agriculture in the total area of Canadian exports. Indeed, the hon. member for Regina East (Mr. Burton) pointed out that United States imports from Canada amounted to 15 per cent of the total not covered by the particular bill we were discussing, which was concerned with aid to industrial production in Canada because of the United States surcharge. That measure was Bill C-262.

It can be pointed out that processed agricultural products could be assisted by Bill C-262. It seems to me we need to assist certain raw products such as wheat and rye as much as certain processed products such as Wheaties and rye whisky.

[*Mr. Ouellet.*]

My remarks tonight stem specifically from a question I put to the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce (Mr. Pepin) on September 17. As reported in *Hansard* at page 7948, I asked the minister the following question:

In view of the difficulties faced by the Canadian apple industry as a result of the U.S. surcharge and also a poor apple crop this year, has the government yet made a decision on the request by the British Columbia Tree Fruit Growers for \$64,000 in export assistance similar to that contemplated for industries in Bill C-262?

I received a reply from the minister which is known as a "nuthin'" answer—spelled "in", not "ing"—to the effect that he would look into it. This was a month ago and I have not heard the result of his looking into it. I asked, further, whether, since Canadian agricultural products—not only apples and strawberries but vegetables as well—were constantly being threatened by dumped imports or foreign offers at distress prices, the government was preparing legislation that could be applied instantly to protect Canadian producers of agricultural products. The minister replied, rather self-righteously—as I think he had to—that when this was done by other countries it was difficult for Canadians to do the same thing because we have, of course, opted for fewer trade barriers as a method of increasing general trade in the world.

I have no quarrel with that, but I would point out that my party also favours a general lowering of artificial trade barriers erected between countries. Competition is fine, provided the competitors are evenly matched. I think we would all agree that when Montreal plays Toronto, the fight is even. But when the fight is between the Chicago Black Hawks of the NHL, with all their resources and capital, and the Kelowna Packers, in the Allan Cup it is obvious the strength is not evenly matched. This uneven competition exists in the agricultural field today, not only seasonally but in terms of production.

May I take a moment or two to give some of the background to the question I have raised. In the Okanagan we have experienced two years of low returns. The apple crops are poor this year. Banks are tightening credit. Fresh apples exported to the United States have been affected by the surcharge to the tune of an extra \$66,000. We probably exchange about a million boxes each a year. There has been a large crop of pears in California, and as a result of this large crop, distress offers have lowered prices of these products. The price in the Okanagan is about \$1.50 a box.

United States prunes are offered at 2 cents a pound, which does not even cover the picking cost. When we come to apple pies—and what can be more American, or shall I say North American, than apple pie—most of the apples in the pies in British Columbia come from China and Japan. Even our own public institutions, such as Woodlands School for the Retarded, import United States apples constantly, though the Premier himself comes from the centre of the apple growing area, Kelowna.

The United States has always maintained, despite the GATT agreement, the two cents surcharge or tariff against Canadian apples, while we have ceased to do the same. I think we need instant machinery to deal with threats like this to our agricultural stability. We have been talking for the past month, about certain measures to protect wheat and various grains, but I know of no similar measures to protect potatoes.