

Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement

The difficulty that I see in competition with the bilateral arrangement is not only the proximity of the United States. It does not have to spend money on storing silage, to the same degree. It does not have to spend money on ventilating barns, to the same degree. When the calves are coming it does not have to worry about heat lamps, to the same degree. Let us not get into a war in a bilateral fashion with the United States dairy industries, because, knowing enough about it, I know who will lose.

If people are going to be retrained to work in new industries, do not forget that the dairy farmer may be living in the house in which he was born. It is not the same as moving someone from one side of a factory to another and retraining that person. What is the Government going to do with a 55-year old dairy farmer? That has to be thought about. It is a very fragile industry. Much of what has been said here this week has put dairy farming in a very broad, basic category and called it agriculture.

It is a highly technical aspect of agriculture, and it has to be addressed separately. In the beef cattle business there is a little leeway. I am not sure it will come out well either, but at least the cattle can be held over a little. It is pretty difficult to hold over fresh milk.

• (1330)

While I am being told by farmers that they are not doing too badly at the moment, they do stress that they cannot afford to miss one cheque. It is for that reason that I refer to agriculture as a delicate industry. It is one about which there has been simply too much flippancy. There has been flippancy about most aspects of the Free Trade Agreement, with the Government simply saying: "Don't worry, we will retrain you. And if we don't, somebody will look after you."

Well, I can tell you that I am not going to see the dairy industry in the riding of Leeds—Grenville put at risk.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Jordan: All through the election campaign we heard: "Don't worry, we can get out of it in six months."

In a conversation I had with a 58-year-old dairy farmer in my riding, I asked him how long it took him to put his holstein herd together, and his reply was: "All of my life."

If that individual loses his herd as a consequence of the Free Trade Agreement and, six months later, when

the agreement is terminated, he wants to get back into dairy farming, he would not live long enough to be able to do so, and in fact nor would his children.

He now has his herd with just the right strains in it, and it has taken him his whole life to achieve that. If anything happens to his operation, there is simply no way in which, in his lifetime, he could get back into dairy farming.

So, to say that we can get out of the deal on six months notice is of no comfort to the farming community. In fact, it got to be a bit of a joke among the farming community.

It is my sincere hope that the Government is proven to be right about this whole deal. While the fact of an industry or sector of the Canadian economy being adversely impacted by the Free Trade Agreement would make for great ammunition for Question Period, it is not something that anyone would want to see happen. It is my sincere hope, and that of my constituents, and I am sure everyone in the country, that the Government will be proven right.

It is something that will have to be closely monitored, and one of the reasons that it will have to be closely monitored is the lack of a definition of what constitutes an unfair subsidy.

The Minister for International Trade, in *The Globe and Mail* of July 26 last, admitted that there is no definition of what constitutes an unfair subsidy. "It is too bad", he said, "we haven't been able to agree on what constitutes an unfair subsidy."

It seems to me that the whole idea would have been to get that established before entering into the Free Trade Agreement.

Hon. Members opposite are continually throwing out the name "Donald Macdonald". It may be that because he is a Liberal, he has some credibility. However, Donald Macdonald, one of the early architects of the free trade deal, wanted the agri-food industry excluded. I imagine Donald Macdonald was a long way away when the deal was signed.

During the election campaign, I had occasion to watch a televised panel discussion involving a senior cabinet Minister and two opponents of the Free Trade Agreement, and I can recall that senior cabinet Minister saying: "You know, it was twenty to twelve and we had to have a deal. It was twenty to twelve and we had to have a deal by midnight."