

Supply

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the response is as follows:

	1989/90	1990/91	1991/92	1992/93	1993/94
Number of penalties*	157,193	140,830	130,081	151,130	131,237
Number of prosecutions authorized	3,192	1,608	1,369	1,238	948
Penalties and prosecutions authorized	160,385	142,438	131,450	152,368	132,185
Number of convictions	3,591	1,717	1,017	739	718
Claims adjudicated (initial and renewal)	3,290,535	3,825,794	3,889,890	3,628,432	3,300,925
Penalties and prosecutions as percentage of initial and renewal	5%	4%	3%	4%	4%

* Penalties are an administrative remedy under the UI legislation but are considered as fraud.

[English]

Mr. Milliken: Mr. Speaker, I ask that the remaining questions be allowed to stand.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[Translation]

SUPPLY

ALLOTTED DAY—AGRICULTURE

Mr. Jean-Guy Chrétien (Frontenac, BQ) moved:

That this House denounce the government for reducing the general budget of the Department of Agriculture by 19 per cent and milk subsidies by 30 per cent and for converting grain transportation subsidies into direct subsidies to Western farmers, thereby enabling the latter to diversify and enjoy an unfair competitive advantage over farmers in Eastern Canada.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I take great pleasure this morning, as agriculture and agri-food critic, to start the debate on this opposition day on agricultural issues because we in the Bloc Québécois believe that these matters must get all the attention they deserve.

• (1010)

With the cuts it set in motion, the federal government recently gave the impression that the agricultural sector is of secondary importance.

I would like to thank my colleagues who agreed to speak today in the course of this opposition day on agriculture. They are the hon. members for Joliette, Champlain, Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead, Shefford, Matapédia—Matane, Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, Lotbinière and Québec—Est.

You will note, Mr. Speaker, that, with the exception of the hon. member for Québec—Est, all of them represent ridings with a high percentage of farm producers and a wide variety of farm types. Therefore, should you take the time to listen carefully to all the speeches, you will be fully versed, by the end of the day, in Canadian agriculture and, especially, in Quebec agriculture.

Accordingly, with the motion we are putting before this House today, which you have just read, we are strongly criticizing the cuts the government is preparing to make on the backs of farmers. In addition to slashing in the agricultural sector, the federal government is wielding an axe there, completely indiscriminately.

I will take the liberty of reading word for word the motion tabled in the House today by the official opposition: "That this House denounce the government for reducing the general budget of the Department of Agriculture by 19 per cent and milk subsidies by 30 per cent"—this is a direct attack against the 12,000 dairy farmers of Quebec—"and for converting grain transportation subsidies into direct subsidies to Western farmers, thereby enabling the latter to diversify and enjoy an unfair competitive advantage over farmers in Eastern Canada"—and, of course, farmers in Quebec.

We denounce not only the cuts, but the Liberal government's lack of long term vision for this sector. I see the Minister of Agriculture across from me. I salute him and invite him to spend the entire day in the House to discover what Quebec MPs think of his recent budget and his vision for agriculture in Quebec and Canada. All he is succeeding in doing is throwing the market off balance with inappropriate compensatory measures.

It looks like a wind of concern is blowing through the Liberal camp. They are trying to target the agricultural sector by waving the spectre of the catastrophes that will befall us when Quebec achieves sovereignty. We will therefore take this opportunity to set the record straight.

Of all the spectres being waved by the federalists, milk quotas are, by far, the one most often hauled out of moth balls to frighten the farming community. Just recently the paper, *La Terre de chez nous*, and the daily, *La Presse*, described in length the disasters awaiting farmers in a sovereign Quebec, according to an agronomist.

• (1015)

Also in *La Presse*, a columnist said that sovereignty is dangerous because, if Quebec voted yes in the referendum, its supply management system would be dashed to pieces.

The Council for Canadian Unity has made milk quotas the cornerstone of its campaign of fear targeting the farming sector. It says that if Quebec separates, it would lose its milk quota for sales to Canada immediately—not tomorrow or the next day but immediately. That hits home harder and is scarier.