

and not by name. If you are referring to the Prime Minister, he may be referred to as "the Right Hon. the Prime Minister"; or, in the case of the Hon. Member for Kamloops, as the House Leader of the New Democratic Party, and so forth.

Ms. Stewart: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Prime Minister, on behalf of farmers like Glen Cole and his family, and Jim Tunney, who are representative of the countless other dairy farmers in Canada, I implore you to put in place the necessary safeguards in this deal so that these farmers may continue contributing to our marvellous country by maintaining their way of life.

As well, fruit growers associations have expressed their concerns about the fact that, without a doubt, a part of the soft food industry is definitely going to be hurt. Fresh B.C. peaches and cherries will become a rarity. They will be supplanted by imports. Soft fruit such as cherries, peaches, apricots, and pears are covered by a 10 per cent seasonal tariff that protects production from less expensive U.S. imports. Seasonal import tariffs have protected producers from being swamped by cheaper U.S. products during the short Canadian growing season.

Canada's shorter growing season limits our ability to grow fruit and vegetables relative to the United States. Consequently, fruit and vegetables are generally in larger supply and can be obtained at lower prices in the United States than in Canada.

In horticulture, the southern farmers have a major competitive advantage. Because of the warmer climate and longer growing season, they can often get two crops per year, and up to a 40 per cent heavier yield per crop than can farmers in Ontario, thus cutting their cost of production below that of the Canadian grower.

An acre in southwestern Ontario can grow 19 tonnes of tomatoes in one year; in Quebec, it grows only 10 tonnes.

In California, the same amount of land will produce 31 tonnes. New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island yield 11 to 13 tonnes of potatoes per year per acre; Quebec, 9 tonnes; and Manitoba, 6 to 7 tonnes.

In the State of Washington, the average yield is 26 tonnes per acre.

One does not have to be a mathematical genius to figure out that American tomatoes and potatoes are a lot cheap in the market than are ours.

Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement

The fact of the matter is that Canadians farm in the top half of the continent, the cold half. The Free Trade Agreement, left in its present form, will penalize the Canadian farmer.

A big loser in the trade deal is the horticultural industry. According to Article 702, the removal of all tariffs in agriculture and food products includes the 10 per cent seasonal tariff on fruit and vegetables.

It has been stressed that under this agreement, Article 702.1, for the next 20 years the Government may reinstate the 10 per cent seasonal tariff should prices fall below 90 per cent of the average monthly import price as calculated over the preceding three years, provided that there had been no increase in total acreage planted to the specific crop in question.

Surplus fruit and vegetables that are grown in the southern United States can be shipped to Canadian markets at far less cost than Canadian farmers can even produce them. Yet, experience has demonstrated that the lower cost of production for these products is not always passed on to the consumer. Moreover, because Canadian food processors pay higher prices for Canadian than for U.S. fruit and vegetables, by eliminating the tariffs on fruit and vegetables the free trade deal will put pressure on processors to relocate their operations in the United States, closer to the source of cheaper supplies.

The Canadian food processor associations have also voiced their concerns about the free trade deal. They have said that the "current free trade contract will negatively affect three-quarters of a million Canadians who earn their living in farm production and the food processing industry". They anticipate that over 150,000 jobs will be lost.

After surveying the member companies on the impact of the Free Trade Agreement, the vast majority fear that they cannot compete because of higher labour costs and the higher cost of Canadian farm products. They predict that under the Free Trade Agreement there will be a net loss of jobs in Canada, with many American branch plants pulling back across the border. Moreover, they indicate that future expansion by Canadian based food corporations would most likely be in the U.S.

Hence, the plants that are most vulnerable to the threat of increased American competition will be the smaller Canadian-owned plants. The larger conglomerate food companies have the best chance of survival, and the majority of these are American.