

appropriate to listen either to his colleagues from Quebec, or to the representatives of certain provinces, or to the members of certain federations, and also—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I am sorry. Questions and comments.

● (1820)

Mr. Alain Tardif (Richmond-Wolfe): Mr. Speaker, I am indeed quite pleased to take part in the debate on third reading of this bill. I cannot help remembering the summer months last year when Quebec farm producers were very concerned. Rightly or wrongly, they had the brilliant idea to meet with the various party candidates who were hoping to represent their respective constituencies. The discussions focused on a number of problems faced by the farmers. We heard quite a lot about the unpaid \$31 million, as well as the \$450,000 to sheep producers. We heard also a lot about their problems with the Farm Credit Corporation. We were told about the long term dairy policy, the concern of the retiring farmer about the future of his farm, the problems of research, as well as all the other problems stemming from those I have just enumerated.

Overriding these problems, Mr. Speaker, we could see as a sort of common denominator the very deep concern Quebec farm producers had about their future, and what lay ahead. Well, I felt it was quite normal and proper for these farmers who, for the most part are businessmen, to inquire and possibly find out what the future and the various political parties had to offer.

In reply to these questions, various candidates, including some hon. members who unfortunately are sitting on the government side, told Quebec farmers what they wanted to hear. They promised an era of stability. They promised them security. I repeat, they told them what they wanted to hear. Hardly a year had elapsed when the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Wise) introduced Bill C-25 which is an unbelievable insult and a denial of the farmers' well deserved aspirations, a total disregard of Quebec farmers' concerns, and an end to the very good protection schemes they had devised for themselves over the past few years.

My colleague from Shefford (Mr. Lapierre) pointed out a few minutes ago that for pork production, which is extremely important in Quebec, the provincial stabilization program has paid over \$20 per pork unit, while the federal program has paid slightly more than \$6. For that reason, it is quite normal, fair and reasonable that Quebec pork producers want to keep what they have obtained, set up, built out of nothing and paid for, because those payments are not a godsend, Mr. Speaker, they come from the producers' contributions.

Now in Quebec, and I think that our colleagues opposite should know that a number of decisions were made in Quebec in the past few years: the decision to promote certain types of

production and to support producers; the decision to intensify production in certain sectors. And in my opinion, those are quite legitimate decisions, because the provinces are allowed to make them under the Canadian Constitution.

In that connection, I should like, if you allow me, Mr. Speaker, to quote from an editorial published in *La Terre de chez nous* which says:

Under the Canadian constitutional system, agriculture is a shared responsibility, and the federal government has no right to prevent any province from supporting its production and developing its agriculture through means deemed to be the soundest and the most appropriate by that province.

That was precisely, Mr. Speaker, the decision and the step taken by Quebec farmers a few years ago, and now with Bill C-25 they are told: "Ladies and gentlemen, if you want to take advantage of this legislation—which, by the way, is indeed less generous than the legislation now covering them—you will have to give up in the first place the system which you have set up and your yearly contributions." This is rather unacceptable, it seems to me, and I can easily understand that all farmers without exception are up in arms against the federal measure. I also understand why the unions and producers' associations so fiercely object to Bill C-25.

As a result of the uncertainty, discrimination and inequity, they feel prompted to ask: "What do you have to offer in return?" Producers have the right to wonder what the Government is ready to offer as an alternative after denying them what they have so dearly paid for throughout the years. What is the Government entitled to offer as an alternative, what is it entitled to give them? Unfortunately, Bill C-25 does not provide any answer to those concerns, and here is another interesting excerpt from *La Terre de chez nous*:

Bill C-25 does not specify on what bases the stabilization payments will be calculated nor what will be the contribution of every party to those agreements.

Two items which, rightly so, as you will agree, Mr. Speaker, are extremely important. This legislation provides that the formula for computing stabilization payments and the contribution of each party shall be agreed upon by the three parties. Finally, he concludes that part by stating:

In this, the Progressive Conservative Government is following the same strategy as with all other issues. It shies away from decisions by minimizing the opportunities for confrontation.

On that item, Mr. Speaker, not only are farmers just as concerned, there is simply utter confusion, total and absolute uncertainty. One thing that is still more frustrating, still more unbelievable is the fact that the Minister is using an extremely acute problem, a most difficult problem now faced by farming in Quebec, the countervail that was slapped on pork products some time ago. At that level, there is ample talk that any direct or indirect subsidy would be liable to be met with that kind of countervail, which sooner or later would do considerable harm to farming. Again, that attitude, those comments are definitely and absolutely refuted by an article that sounds