

Supply—Agriculture

45 to 50 million pounds. It is expected that in 1961, there will be an over-production of turkeys in the United States.

Judging from past experience, we have every reason to believe that American turkey producers would immediately object, if Canadian turkey producers ever shipped even a small percentage of that quantity beyond the 45th parallel. In 1959, towards the end of the season, Canada shipped a few thousand pounds of turkey. Representatives of the turkey producers in Washington soon got the authorities to put a stop to those shipments.

The Canadian turkey industry is, of course, concerned. What would happen if, this year or later, we allowed our market to be flooded with low grade incubator eggs or with turkey chicks and grown turkeys?

Whenever Canada imports those products, she is in fact buying birds fed with American grain. That means tons of food, thousands of hours of work, while our own grain remains unsold at a time when unemployment is rife in this country.

To set this right, to avoid failure for our producers and to safeguard the interests of that industry, the government would do well to stand fast and not yield to any pressure aimed at abolishing quotas or customs tariffs, and maintain a controlled ceiling of 4 million pounds.

I believe, Mr. Chairman, that in maintaining the quotas the government would greatly assist fowl producers.

On February 18, 1960, a brief was submitted by the cigar and pipe tobacco vendors co-operative, to the Minister of Finance (Mr. Fleming). That crop being very important in my constituency, may I suggest that those imports constitute a permanent threat to Canadian production.

For instance, in 1960, manufacturers used nearly two and a quarter million pounds of imported tobacco; this was almost 28 per cent of the total quantities used. And there is a new factor: those imports are becoming diversified. Whereas, traditionally, manufacturers import mainly from Cuba and the United States, in 1959 and 1960, there was a trend to buy from underdeveloped countries, like the Dominican Republic and others, at prices which dangerously competed with our Canadian production. A quarter of a million pounds from those countries entered Canada in 1960.

[Mr. Pigeon.]

In order to complete the comparison, let us add that except for imports from Cuba and the Philippines, the American tariff rate is considerably higher than ours. It is 16.1 cents for unstemmed leaf and 23 cents for stemmed leaf, whereas the Canadian rates are 12½ cents and 20 cents a pound respectively.

That is why the Quebec cigar tobacco producers are asking the government to consider the situation and see that nothing is allowed to impair that production which, economically speaking, represents a large amount of money for the province of Quebec.

Mr. Chairman, in closing my remarks, I would like to say a word about the proportion of Canadian bilinguals in the federal civil service, and more particularly in the Department of Agriculture. I know that the Department of Agriculture cannot be blamed for the situation, because the civil service commission is an organization independent from the government.

However, I would ask that each year, if possible, a representative of the civil service commission, or a commissioner, visit the various faculties of agriculture and veterinary medicine in Quebec, or the various research departments of our universities—a procedure which might also be applied to universities in other provinces—in order to explain to graduates and other students what opportunities they have to serve the Canadian government in the federal civil service.

If a member of the civil service commission would visit the universities of Quebec and explain to those about to graduate and to graduates the advantages to be gained from employment with the Department of Agriculture, I think this would help remedy this situation.

Those, Mr. Chairman, were the few remarks I wanted to make in the best interests of our farmers and of agriculture in general.

(Text):

Mr. Thomas: There are a few comments I should like to make on this first item of the estimates of the Department of Agriculture. I should like to say a word concerning the difficulties facing all sugar beet growers in Canada. As hon. members are aware, beets are grown in four areas, namely Alberta, Manitoba, southwestern Ontario and the province of Quebec. Due to a number of circumstances the growers, especially those in southwestern Ontario, have had a very difficult time and for some years the industry there has been in a marginal position. It is very questionable under present circumstances whether it pays the farmers of southwestern Ontario to continue growing beets.