

*Oral Questions*

**Hon. John Wise (Minister of Agriculture):** Mr. Speaker, I am now certain that I heard enough of the last question to know that indeed the Hon. Member was absolutely wrong, because it really points out the need for closer co-operation and, indeed, further meetings with the President and the United States, to resolve these problems in the future. There is no question about that at all.

The Hon. Member must remember that this is a situation that started in 1984. I believe we should take some satisfaction in the fact that the President of the United States indicated that on his return to the United States he would do everything possible to eliminate these situations from taking place in the future.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

## AGRICULTURE

## PORK PRODUCERS—GOVERNMENT POSITION

**Hon. Jean Lapierre (Shefford):** Mr. Speaker, I also have a question for the Minister of Agriculture. The Minister says that the American President went back to the United States and did what he could. He can thank the President for unilaterally slapping on a tax of 5.3 cents per pound. If that is the kind of help this Government wants from the President of the United States, Canadian farmers are not likely to forget it.

Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives have barely managed to sleep off their Irish coffee when we get a tax of 5.3 cents per pound. The Minister of Agriculture must be aware of the fact that since this morning, the markets are in a panic, the price of pork has dropped nearly 10 cents and millions of dollars worth of orders have been cancelled. What has the Minister done this morning to deal with a crisis that is going to ruin the pork producing industry?

[English]

**Hon. John Wise (Minister of Agriculture):** Mr. Speaker, I think we should recognize that this question was raised yesterday outside the House and I responded to it yesterday. I indicated that I am extremely disappointed that this action was taken by the United States Government. However, it should be noted that it is a preliminary action and, of course, we will not know the final outcome until June or July.

We should also recognize that there are some very legitimate reasons why fairly substantial volumes of pork are moving to the United States, to the extent of approximately 20 per cent of our domestic production. Most will realize that the major contributing factor is that there is a substantial difference in the dollar. There are lower labour costs in U.S. plants, and American slaughter operations can buy the types of hogs from Canadian sources that their market requires.

[Translation]

**Mr. Lapierre:** Mr. Speaker, I would say to the Minister that his answer is not worth a pig's squeal to producers in Quebec and the rest of Canada.

Mr. Speaker, during his visit, President Reagan told the Prime Minister he was as close as his telephone. Has the Minister of Agriculture approached the Prime Minister to ask him to call President Reagan immediately before the entire agricultural industry is flat on its back?

[English]

**Mr. Wise:** Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member and, indeed, his opposition colleague, continue to ignore the obvious facts in this case. This action began in 1984 and the Hon. Member should recognize that, indeed, the lines of communication are always open and they are utilized at every possible opportunity when we think it will be in the best interests of domestic producers. I can assure the Hon. Member that we intend to utilize every line of communication to resolve this problem positively, in favour of Canada's pork producers.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

## REGIONAL ECONOMIC EXPANSION

## REQUEST FOR CLARIFICATION ON NUMBER OF JOBS PROMISED BY BELL HELICOPTER AT MIRABEL

**Mr. Steven W. Langdon (Essex-Windsor):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct a question to the Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion, if he could return to his seat.

Yesterday, Bell Helicopter announced there will be a one-year delay in production start-up at its plant in Mirabel. When the Minister met with the directors of the company, did he mention the fact that the company president announced he would be hiring only 600 people instead of delivering 2,100 jobs as promised?

[English]

**Hon. Sinclair Stevens (Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion):** Mr. Speaker, I think this unfortunate misunderstanding that has occurred with respect to the number of jobs comes partly from the rather inaccurate advertising that the previous Government put out concerning this particular development.

The job expectation of 3,000 jobs or 2,000 jobs that is generally referred to is over a fairly long timeframe. The number of jobs that are being specifically talked about today and committed to are for a shorter timeframe and not dissimilar to the original announcement that was made at the time the Bell helicopter deal was originally entered into.

## REQUEST FOR PUBLIC INQUIRY

**Mr. Steven W. Langdon (Essex-Windsor):** Mr. Speaker, in view of the fact that the Minister has acknowledged that there