

*Privilege—Mr. Andre*

Affairs has asked to make a very brief statement on a matter of privilege.

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[*Translation*]

## HOUSE OF COMMONS

## EXPRESSION OF REGRET BY MINISTER OF CONSUMER AND CORPORATE AFFAIRS CONCERNING READING OF MOTION

**Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday in the House, I reacted to a lack of courtesy on the part of the Opposition and unfortunately, in so doing, I was discourteous to my Francophone colleagues.

I had asked that the long and complex motion I tabled in the House be deemed to have been read. When the Opposition refused its consent, I read the entire motion so quickly that the interpreters were unable to do their work. I sincerely regret any discourtesy I may have shown towards my Francophone colleagues and to all Francophones who were trying to follow the proceedings.

## ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[*Translation*]

## TRADE

## CANADA-UNITED STATES TRADE AGREEMENT—FRUIT AND VEGETABLE PRODUCERS—GOVERNMENT POSITION

**Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Deputy Prime Minister.

Canadians all know that our climate is severe and our geography problematic. Our growing season is much shorter than in the United States. That is why we have always given our farmers seasonal protection.

Canadians also realize that it is in the national interest to have food products, from soup to nuts, processed here in Canada.

So why did the Government sign a trade agreement with United States that destroys our fresh fruit and vegetable producers and is a threat to our food processing industry? Is the Government trying to wipe out our family farms here in Canada?

[*English*]

**Hon. John Wise (Minister of Agriculture):** Mr. Speaker, I welcome this opportunity to respond to the opening question of the Right Hon. Leader of the Official Opposition. One has to deal with reality and facts. The bilateral trade arrangement between Canada and the United States as it relates to agriculture is a very good deal for Canadian agriculture.

• (1420)

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Wise:** The right hon. gentleman must realize that 50 per cent of farm income comes from export sales. He must also realize the fact that, excluding grains and oil seeds, two-thirds of all farm income comes from commodities sold exclusively on the United States market.

The hon. gentleman must also realize the fact that there is no way we can continue to have a strong and viable agricultural industry in Canada by feeding a market of only 24 million Canadians. If we are to have growth and expansion, which is what we want in the agri-food industry, we must have access to the huge U.S. market of 235 million Americans.

## SIGNING OF AGREEMENT—GOVERNMENT POSITION

**Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Agriculture kept assuring the House that agriculture would not be part of any trade deal with the United States.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra):** Above all, the Minister of Agriculture ought to know that so-called free trade in agriculture between this country and the United States is not possible. Our farmers have a three to five-month growing season compared to a 12-month growing season in the south of the United States. He knows that that is not possible.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra):** The Minister appears to concede that.

The Minister and his colleagues keep telling us that it is too early to tell whether our Canadian system of two-price wheat will be eliminated under this agreement. The Government keeps telling us in the House that it is too early to tell which of our chicken producers, fruit producers, or vegetable producers will be destroyed. The Government keeps telling us that it is too early to tell whether our yoghurt manufacturers, food processing manufacturers, or cereal manufacturers will be run out of business by this deal.

I will direct my question to the Minister of Agriculture. How could the Government have signed a deal without caring about the long-term effects on the Canadian people, particularly on those who grow and process the food which Canadians eat every day?

**Hon. John Wise (Minister of Agriculture):** Mr. Speaker, the right hon. gentleman indicates that the Minister of Agriculture, that being myself, indicated to this House that agriculture would not be part of the bilateral trade arrangements. Indeed, that is absolutely false. We made our position very clear as we entered the bilateral trade arrangement with