

Mr. Fred McCain (Carleton-Charlotte): Mr. Speaker, I am at your disposal and I appreciate your position.

A certain coincidence makes this motion extremely timely, Mr. Speaker. The information requested is pertinent and is important to a situation which exists in relation to a recent ruling of the Department of Commerce in the United States on a surcharge on the entry of potatoes from Canada to that country. The information requested would be extremely valuable to those who are trying to prepare the case because unquestionably there is an element of subsidy on agricultural products in the United States. In the last ten years this subsidy has increased from \$2 billion per year to an estimated \$20 billion for this crop year.

The products involved are entering our market directly or indirectly. Whether they enter as corn or meat, as wine or canned products, or however they enter this country, we must ask whether they are receiving the benefit of that subsidy. I submit to you, Mr. Speaker, that this information is vital.

● (1800)

I have no intention of trying to talk this Bill out. I submit that if the Garrison Dam project goes forward, it will incorporate more subsidy for the farmers of the irrigated area than all the agricultural subsidies paid in Canada. Yet part of the ruling with respect to the surcharge on potatoes going into the United States is that there might be some subsidies in Canada. I suppose you might say it is the case of the pot calling the kettle black, but our agricultural budget in no way approaches \$20 billion, which will be theirs in this year. I do not want to impute, and I did not mean to do so; I had to draw a conclusion. There was nothing else which I could do a few moments ago under the circumstances. I heard nothing from the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Dionne) which indicated an objection to tabling these figures. These figures are important to Canada.

Not too long ago it was my pleasure to be in Europe and to discuss the movement of agricultural products. I have repeated, perhaps not in this House but many times to my friends on this side of the House, that 500,000 tonnes of barley was exported from the European Economic Community, and that the subsidy paid on that export exceeded the price paid by the Canadian Wheat Board to the Canadian farmer. That is the extent to which Canadian farmers are competing with subsidies given by other countries in the world market. Not too long ago we received grape concentrates from France at little more than the cost of freight and container. This concentrate arrived in this nation of ours in competition with our wine industry on that basis and without the application of additional duty.

I submit that this motion is indeed timely and that we should get every single aspect of subsidy, direct and indirect, which is paid by the Government of the United States of America to its agricultural producers. It should, for instance, include the benefits which accrue to farmers through the FHA because they get loans and second loans and third loans through the FHA and those farmers are not closed out. They are given a chance to recover, a chance which our Farm Credit

Agricultural Subsidies

Corporation, because of its underfinancing, has been absolutely and utterly unable to do.

When we are talking about a country imposing surcharge of duty on us, I would like to point out to you, Mr. Speaker, that the potato is the subject matter of today. I want to point out to every Hon. Member of this House, and I ask them to listen carefully, that there are at the present time agricultural organizations in the United States, commodity by commodity, looking at what will be the ultimate outcome of the potato ruling. Anyone in this nation who is interested in agriculture, and who thinks that this process is going to stop with the consideration of the potato application from the State of Maine, has to be blinding himself to the realities which exist in the area of trade in the United States, and for which protection is being sought in every way possible.

It would be a tremendous bonus to the case of Canadian agriculture to be able to present a totally knowledgeable presentation outlining the subsidies which are paid by the Government of the United States, directly or indirectly, to its farmers.

I am not going to take any more time, Mr. Speaker, because I want this motion to pass. I want that information this week because, as the Parliamentary Secretary said, "We have it". Then why not put it on the Table so it might help all of our agriculture all across Canada? Whether it be meat, grain, fruit, or vegetables, nothing is immune to a regional application from any commodity group anywhere in the United States to the Department of Commerce of the United States. I am deeply concerned. Let us please have that information.

● (1805)

Mr. Robert Daudlin (Essex-Kent): Mr. Speaker, I, like the Hon. Member who has just spoken, have experienced first hand the effect of the discussions surrounding Maine potatoes and the eastern Canada potato issue. The Hon. Member will know that we have just come from deliberations with respect to tomato imports which so drastically affected production during the 1982 crop and threw into complete disarray Canadian marketing of canned tomatoes. When put together with the production which took place in the 1982 crop year, which was exceptional, this exacerbated the entire problem and put us into a situation where we have our already struggling canning industry going into a tailspin.

I must confess that I did not have the opportunity to hear in their complete form the remarks addressed to the House by the Parliamentary Secretary. However, I would find it difficult to believe that we are able at this point to respond to what is obviously a very difficult request at best, if not impossible, to delineate all the subsidies, direct or indirect, there might be on agricultural products. I wonder if we would not end up comparing apples and oranges, or comparing indirect subsidies involved in putting an agricultural student through a Canadian university with, say, the value to farmers of a major irrigation project the likes of which were referred to by the Hon. Member.