

Productivity and Trade

There are a number of success stories with respect to the program for export market development. It is worth noting that H. A. Simons, of Vancouver, with the assistance of the export development program landed a \$50 million design contract for a \$500 million pulp and paper complex in Poland last year, by far the single biggest pulp and paper complex in Europe. This was done by a Canadian company in Vancouver with the assistance of the program for export market development, a branch of the Department of Industry, Trade and Commerce. Another Vancouver company was successful in putting together a consortium for a sawmilling operation in Iran. Another western company, ATCO Industries of Alberta and Montreal—

Mr. Paproski: A good firm.

Mr. Gillespie: It is a very good firm. They obtained contracts for prefabricated structures in Saudi Arabia to a total value of over \$30 million after having obtained earlier multimillion contracts in Libya. They will tell you they got that contract with assistance from the Canadian government. With Export Development Corporation financing and the kind of export market development assistance I have referred to, RCA Canada has been awarded a \$32 million telecommunication contract in the Congo.

● (1720)

I have enjoyed taking part in this debate because, as hon. members will recognize, I am familiar with many of the initiatives which have been taken over the past year. I hope very much that members opposite, instead of trying to paint a picture of gloom, will get out and help us persuade the Canadian business community to devote more attention to the export market.

[Translation]

Mr. C.-A. Gauthier (Roberval): Mr. Speaker, the motion presented today is in my opinion most interesting. It reads as follows:

That this House deplores the lack of any effective government policies to deal with Canada's worsening trade performance and, especially, the government's failure to provide meaningful incentives to increase productivity—

To diversify the debate, I wish to discuss two points which particularly concern my area, the first being agriculture. I would also like to draw the attention of the government on that important poultry problem and blame it for doing nothing to protect our producers against the dumping of American poultry on our domestic markets. Consequently, the local market has reached saturation point and the producers are compelled to set quotas to such an extent that their business is unproductive. I happen to know the problem of a poultryman who has been fined for exceeding his production quota and told to reduce his production by half because the Quebec market has reached saturation point. And what is the cause? Certainly not the 17 producers in the Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean-Roberval area who have to produce at a loss in 1976 because they can use only 50 per cent of their facilities despite the fact they have the same maintenance costs, the same municipal taxes, the same insurance on buildings and the same depreciation to account for. No wonder there are so many bankruptcies in that sector in our area.

I am not asking why there are only 17 producers remaining, who vegetate and try to continue to work for a few more years. And specially let us not ask why in the last few years we have lost 50 per cent of our regional quotas, when cartels grab these quotas to control more securely the production of our area, perhaps with American funds. And what does the government do? It has passed legislation against combines and dumping but these laws remain dead letters. Our wholesalers continue to import American chicken and the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce (Mr. Jamieson) has nothing to say about it. Worse than that, Mr. Speaker, when we try to find out what is happening, we realize he does not know it himself.

As recently as last week, I asked him how many import permits he had granted for the import of American chicken, and I mentioned to him that last year, 25 million pounds of American chicken had been imported in Canada. At least that is the figure known today, besides what goes on under the counter.

The minister does not even know how much permits he has issued. I would even believe he does not know that our Canadian buyers do not need permits to import American poultry for the Quebec market. And as evidence of those allegations, I might quote the question I asked the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce on July 24, 1976, which was as follows:

Considering that the poultry producers' quotas will be greatly reduced during the next months, which will in turn reduce their revenue, can the minister tell the House whether his department issued licences or permits for the importation of poultry during 1975? If so, can the minister tell if he did so on the recommendation of the Minister of Agriculture?

And the minister gave me this answer:

Mr. Speaker, I do not have that information in front of me. I ask the hon. member to permit me to take the question as notice. I will give him the information as rapidly as I can.

Mr. Speaker, I am still waiting for that answer. But meanwhile the producers keep crying for help.

Yet I was sure the government had had its lesson when in February 1975 a group of producers, frustrated by the inertia of the government with respect to truckloads of American chicken, decided to take justice in their own hands. From then on we have been able to read in the press about the battle the producers were waging. I quote from a newspaper article dated February 22, 1975:

Chickens slaughtered in Saint-Damase by angry farmers.

Mr. Speaker, those farmers were from the province of Quebec.

The protesters were up in arms against the local coop buying its chickens from the United States while the producers who held membership in the coop had to comply with the imposition of quotas amounting to 64 per cent of their usual allotment.

Who was responsible for all that, Mr. Speaker? We read further:

The chickens were earmarked for the Saint-Damase coop which operates the local slaughterhouse. The height of irony is that the president of the coop is Mr. Roger Landry who happens to be the president of the Quebec Federation of Chicken Producers . . .

● (1730)

Mr. Speaker, it is astounding to read that. I continue to quote: