

The fourth point is perhaps the most important. It is the uncertainty and unrest in our marketplace due to the U.S. imports which are coming into Canada now. The most serious consequence of this dilemma is the distinct probability of a reduced incentive to remain in the cattle business all over Canada, with the inevitable result of a reduced number of cattle and higher price for beef at the consumer level. There is another specific item that is at present working to the disadvantage of the cattle industry. I refer to the application of beef tariff drawbacks as this device presently operates with respect to different types and grades of beef being exported from and imported into Canada. Producer cattlemen will be asking appropriate government departments to examine the fairness of these tariff drawbacks.

Before I conclude, I would like to refer to one longer term aspect of the agricultural policy that presently concerns cattlemen.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. I regret to interrupt the hon. member, but the time allotted to him by the order made earlier today has expired.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Marcel Lessard (Lac-Saint-Jean): Mr. Speaker, I note that I have barely five minutes left and I had not foreseen that I would be the one to draw conclusions and/close this debate. However, I could say that we had today the opportunity to talk about agriculture. For several weeks, not to say several months, we had not had the opportunity, in this House, to have a lengthy debate on that industry, which I deem essential to our food security.

One will understand that it is rather difficult to cover in a few minutes a topic as huge and as complex as agriculture; one can certainly not make an analysis of it during such a short time.

I should like at most, Mr. Speaker, to point out to the House, as I have been here for the last eight years, that not a single week not even a single day went by without acrimonious debates on agriculture in this House, either during the oral question period or on the introduction of budgets or government bills.

Mr. Speaker, until a year ago or so, we had debates on agriculture, either on wet grain on account of a bad crop during the fall of a certain year, or on a lack of cars. Prices were too low or we could not export and had to accumulate big stocks. And I could go on indefinitely with the topics and complaints that were raised in this House.

However, today, Mr. Speaker, if one goes back over a year ago one realizes that in that period of one year the subject of agriculture was barely touched on in this House. Why? Because agriculture in Canada in that last year improved notably, as did the plight of farmers. That is why members of the opposition who admit that put an

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end to the criticism they were directing at the government, often rightly so.

The motion we are discussing today and introduced by the hon. member for Crowfoot (Mr. Horner) whom we all know well because of his many interventions in this House, is proof of the fact I just mentioned, namely that agriculture is doing well, not perfectly well—I say so immediately—but much better than it ever did. Indeed, the wording of this motion before us today is the best proof of that. It is so general that one could almost talk about the weather.

The hon. member for Crowfoot (Mr. Horner) did not find one specific point on which to attack the government with respect to agricultural measures. At best he talked about the new feed grain policy. I would like to touch on that point in a few moments and support the Minister of Justice in charge of the Canadian Wheat Board (Mr. Lang) who said among other things that the aim of that measure was fairness.

We from the east, no more than the farmers of British Columbia, have never asked or expected a lower price for feed grain if it meant losses for the Prairies.

We are responsible as Canadians, especially as farmers. In the east we are fully conscious of the interests of western farmers, because we are all dependent on one another in a single Canadian economy. We wish once again to say in this House that our sole objective is equity, fairness and equal opportunity for all.

On that basis, we are ready to support any valid proposal to establish that equity. I see that the time allotted to me will soon be expired. All is not perfect and I am the first to admit it. Indeed, I am concerned by the lack of supplies which we now face. I am also concerned by increases in the cost of living and in agricultural production costs.

But I must admit, Mr. Speaker, that all these are not the fault of the farmers themselves. It is not their fault if we encounter these difficulties. Farmers have done their share and it is up to us as Canadians and as members to continue our support of agriculture.

I will conclude my remarks by paying a well-deserved tribute to our two excellent ministers responsible for agriculture in Canada. As Canadians, we must continue our support so that they can do more, if possible.

[*English*]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: It being 10.30 o'clock p.m., it is my duty to inform the House that pursuant to the order made earlier this day, proceedings on the motion have expired. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until eleven o'clock a.m. tomorrow.

At 10.31 p.m. the House adjourned, without question put, pursuant to special order made this day.