

### *Farm Loans*

This article then goes on to prove it. First of all, the pattern of agricultural trade in an underdeveloped country shows certain characteristics. First of all, they specialize only in one or two major exported crops. They mentioned Brazil with coffee at 33 per cent and sugar at 21 per cent of its export trade. Tanzania has 31 per cent of its trade in coffee. The Philippines exports of sugar represent 33 per cent of its total trade. Seventy-eight per cent of the Dominican Republic's trade is in sugar. Does Canada fit this pattern? Of course it does. Forty per cent of our trade is solely in wheat, a raw product.

The article goes on to say that as a result of this fact we are subject to wild fluctuations in export prices. That also marks an underdeveloped country. It points out that Brazil earned \$1.1 billion from the sale of sugar in 1975, but only \$421 million in 1972. Canada earned \$2 billion from the sale of wheat in 1975, but only \$687 million in 1970.

Another characteristic of an underdeveloped country is that most of its food is exported in the unprocessed, crude form. As a result, you lose jobs in the processing industry.

Another characteristic is that farmers are forced off the land, mostly by the large agri-business corporations. We have not yet reached Brazil's stage where some 6.3 million farmers have left the land, but we have seen the beginning of the trend. There were 381,000 fewer farmers in Canada in 1976 than in 1951. The farming population is down to 5.1 per cent of the population, compared to 16.8 per cent only a few short years ago.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I am perfectly aware that you need an economic unit in order to farm. I have lived in Saskatchewan and have seen where a farmer starved on a quarter section. Later on he starved on a half section, and barely made a living on three quarters of a section a few years later. There are now much larger economic units and I agree with that. There had to be some rationalization of the whole system. But it does not mean that you have to rationalize him out of existence. I think it is a well-known fact that farm land is more productive in the hands of a family farm unit than under any other system. Certainly much more so than the large agri-businesses which are now demanding great quantities of land.

I was very glad to see that at least Prince Edward Island is attempting to put a stop to this. Some time ago the Irving Corporation wanted to add another 6,000 acres to their existing holdings, which would have given them about 10,000 acres on that small island. The government there indicated that perhaps they will put a limit of 3,000 acres on what any one person or corporation can own. I agree with that; I think farming is essential to our way of life.

● (1620)

Canada is certainly an underdeveloped country in relation to its food exports and is in great danger of using most of its arable land for cash crops. Again, I do not think we will ever become like some countries, such as Brazil or Mexico. As a result of large corporations taking a great deal of the land and using it for cash crops, the benefit to the citizens of those

countries does not match the actual return from the sale of cash crops. An article with which I agree states that today in Brazil the sugar workers are provided with less nutrients than were the slaves back in 1880. That is not a good story.

I think the statistics tell the story in Canada. In 1948 crude food exports amounted to 50 per cent of our total food exports. In 1980 our crude production was four fifths of our total food exports. I think that is unreasonable. In this country we are seeing a greater dependency on processed foods, most of which are imported. As a result, the number of jobs we have lost has become a national scandal. We now have a deficit in 11 of the 12 major fabricated food groups, when as late as 1967 the majority were in a trade surplus position.

In my own constituency we have a good example of what has happened in Canada. At one time we grew and processed tomatoes. Our production of canned tomatoes and ketchup was a very viable business. Today, not one single can of tomatoes or one bit of tomato ketchup is being produced in the Okanagan Valley. That is true of many articles. We are told that if this process continues, the tomato industry in Canada will eventually suffer a loss of some 2,365 jobs. It would not be so bad if the tomatoes imported from these large corporations in the United States and Mexico were any good, but they are designed to be picked up by machinery and not to be eaten. Most of these tomatoes could be used in baseball games and they would not suffer at all.

I think that if the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Whelan) has a strategy, he had better look to that problem very quickly, because we certainly have the wherewithal and the means in this country to produce the kinds of foods we need. It is entirely up to us, to this government and to future governments, because this government has only a couple of years more in which to do anything. First of all, what the government must do is to ensure a self-reliant food industry. Canadian farmers and workers should grow and process food in Canada which is of the required quantity and quality. That is the first step. Second, we should ensure that our workers and farmers have sufficient incomes to purchase the food and articles they need. We have the technical know-how. All we need is some direction in policy toward which the people of this country can work, and a commitment toward lowering the interest rates.

At the moment, as a result of the high interest rate policy, all the capital formation in farming has gone to the United States. And why should it not? We are told that because of this government's policy, 25 per cent of foreign investment in the United States comes from Canada. I think it is a shame when we have the technical know-how. All we need is some financial encouragement, and I hope that it will be forthcoming from the government. As I said earlier, the government is beginning to show signs of some enlightenment. I hope it will continue with this positive attitude and work toward an ever-increasing and productive farm industry.

**Mr. G. M. Gurbin (Bruce-Grey):** Mr. Speaker, as a Conservative I am glad to be able to enter the debate on Bill C-88.

**An hon. Member:** You are sure, now?