

Supply

I believe there were about six. During our short period in office we were able to hire two, and I believe we made preparations to place a third. How many additional placements have been made since the minister was appointed Minister of Agriculture for a second term?

Sixth, again referring to a campaign commitment of the Minister of Agriculture, he attracted a great deal of attention on this issue. He said that if re-elected he would immediately renegotiate the level of chicken imports from the United States to Canada. The Liberal campaign document refers specifically to that subject. What is the progress on this issue? Has there been any progress on this promise?

I know the minister went to Paris and China. I have no reason to believe he went to Washington concerning this subject. It is rather interesting that during the time the minister was in China, the United States made a very significant wheat sale to that country. Can the minister advise us whether he was able to make any additional wheat sales to China? I know he is not directly responsible for selling wheat on behalf of the Canadian government. Did he make any other significant sales while there?

We accepted our responsibilities with regard to that issue. The minister will well remember, going back as far as 1973, that he made some very definite commitments to do something about the level of chicken imports. At that time it was about six million pounds. When we assumed office, it was approaching 60 million. We certified the national agency. We renegotiated the import level, a level which gave the Canadian producer about 94 per cent of the domestic market. The minister's hide was saved last summer because of high sales in the United States of that product and because of the very hot, dry summer there. The minister made this definite campaign commitment to renegotiate the level of U.S. chickens coming into Canada. The real question is, when will he fulfil his responsibility and commitment?

I now come to the seventh area I would like to talk about and pose questions to the minister. It is a very important subject, research and development. The minister stated that when he assumed office, funding and research activities would be increased. Again we see no evidence of the minister keeping that commitment.

Increased research funding is vital. We have achieved our present levels of productivity and efficiency largely, if not totally, as a direct result of the efforts of research. Since 50 per cent of all agricultural research is carried on by Agriculture Canada, it is absolutely necessary if the agricultural food industry is to supply the food requirements of Canadians, and indeed others throughout the world in the future, that we continue to increase funding publicly and encourage greater private efforts in the area of research and development.

The minister stated earlier that not that many years ago one farmer fed himself and four or five others. Today that has increased to between 50 and 60. By the year 2000, that food producer will be expected to feed over 200 people.

With that thought in mind, and when one takes into account what will happen in world population growth, our research people face a real challenge. I am confident that our research people have the capabilities and expertise. There is no question about that. However, we will only meet those challenges if our research people are properly funded. We realized the importance of research and, as I indicated earlier, clearly demonstrated our commitment by increasing this funding by approximately \$13 million.

The eighth area I want to deal with is the minister's promise that all agricultural products would be protected to the extent of \$250,000. I refer to the amendment to section 88 of the Bank Act. We have those changes made, but the level of production is not the level of \$250,000 promised by this government. It is \$100,000, which is less than half of the promised level. The minister looks at me with some skepticism. I am only quoting the minister directly from his campaign document.

● (1550)

I realize the minister, on behalf of the government, has introduced two of our measures, first, the provision to allow the deduction of wages as expenses paid to the spouse in a farming operation, and secondly, the meat import law. Because of the very low priority given to agriculture by this government, these measures still may be a long time in coming into effect. I would hope to get a definite commitment today from the minister with reference to the timetable for these two pieces of legislation. If the minister could ever get House time we could give him the clear commitment today that we could move both of these pieces of legislation through this House certainly within half a day.

Then there is Canfarm, this being the eleventh area I am going to touch on. The government has clearly broken a commitment, has clearly broken an agreement made back in 1979. We honoured our commitment while being faced with this very same issue a year ago. We provided \$1.2 million and a loan guarantee of \$4.2 million as called for in the 1979 agreement. If the minister has so much faith in the operation of Canfarm—he and his officials, during committee hearings in the last couple of weeks went clearly on record by indicating that Canfarm services were excellent ones and that they were doing a great job—if he has so much faith in the Canfarm services president, Peter Hannam, then he had better start demonstrating it by dollars and deeds rather than words. Mr. Hannam is a very capable farm leader and he is absolutely correct when he states he has been betrayed by—

Mr. Whelan: No.

Mr. Wise: Yes, he did, Mr. Minister. He said that directly to me. I did not read it in the newspaper, I talked to him directly. Mr. Hannam is a man of his word. He has been betrayed by your government and, in fact, by the Minister of Agriculture.

An hon. Member: Shame!