

S. O. 21

● (1410)

[English]

AGRICULTURE

RED MEAT INDUSTRY OF WESTERN CANADA

Mr. Bob Porter (Medicine Hat): Mr. Speaker, Canada's initiative to host a meeting of the Cairns Group of Agricultural Exporters reflects the lead role the Government is taking in seeking solutions to the serious agricultural trade situation facing the world today. As well, bilateral negotiations between Canada and the United States are important to Canadian agriculture if we are to secure U.S. markets and eliminate trade barriers.

As an Albertan and a producer of grain and livestock, I can assure you, Mr. Speaker, it is essential to the long-term viability of the red meat industry that western Canada have access to the markets in the Pacific northwest and California. Because of distance, changing markets and transportation costs, the flow of products is shifting in western Canada markets to the south. Canadian livestock producers have proven they can compete and in fact have a balance of trade in livestock and meat products in our favour.

Canada is a trading nation, in fact one of the world's great traders. We export more per capita than any of the world's major industrialized nations. The United States is our most important trading partner. Our trading relationship provides growing economic opportunities and work for millions of people on both sides of the border.

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CHARTER OF RIGHTS

REFUGEE STATUS CLAIMANTS' RIGHT TO ORAL HEARINGS

Mr. Dan Heap (Spadina): Mr. Speaker, the Supreme Court of Canada ruled two years ago that under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms every person in Canada who claims to be a refugee from persecution in his homeland must have an oral hearing, that is, he must be present to have his credibility and facts judged by those who will decide his fate. However, the Minister of State for Immigration (Mr. Weiner) keeps declaring publicly that every claimant will be heard and seen by a refugee board member at the port of entry and will thereby receive his oral hearing as guaranteed by the Supreme Court.

That is not true according to the Minister's Bill C-55. For example, a claimant who comes from a so-called non-refugee producing country will never be allowed to tell his story to the board member. Again, a claimant who passed through a so-called safe country will never be allowed to state his claim to the board member.

The Minister's statements in public are plainly contradicted by the words of Bill C-55. His assurance that everyone will

have an oral hearing as guaranteed by the Supreme Court is false. I call upon the Minister to withdraw Bill C-55 and bring forward a new Bill which obeys Canada's Constitution and Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

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[Translation]

ACID RAIN

SPECIAL COMMITTEE IN ROUYN-NORANDA—REQUEST OF INTERVENING PARTIES

Mr. Gabriel Desjardins (Témiscamingue): Mr. Speaker, on Tuesday, May 19, the Special Committee on Acid Rain went to Rouyn-Noranda to meet municipal authorities, the Chamber of Commerce, the Regional Council for Economic Development, the Environment Committee and the regional UPA. These groups made the committee aware of an environmental problem that is specific to Abitibi—Témiscamingue, namely the serious deterioration of our forests, lakes and land, as well as the fact that our maple trees are dying and acid rain is having an impact on human health. These same groups asked the Special Committee on Acid Rain, which is to go to Washington in a few weeks, to put strong pressure on the American Government and urge it to adopt concrete measures to reduce the air pollution that is a major source of acid rain in Abitibi—Témiscamingue.

The committee was very receptive to the various statements and promised to make the necessary representations.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the members of the Committee who agreed to go to Rouyn-Noranda and all the organizations who attended this meeting and who through their testimony are trying to improve the quality of life in Abitibi—Témiscamingue.

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● (1415)

[English]

MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT

MEMBER'S COMMENT ABOUT HAMILTON—APOLOGY REQUESTED

Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East): Mr. Speaker, yesterday in this House the Hon. Member for Mississauga North (Mr. Horner) made a comment about Hamilton which was not only derogatory but insulting to Hamiltonians.

The Hon. Member suggested that if one were to visit our fair city, one would have to wear a gas mask.

I find this remark offensive, and so do the people of Hamilton.