

be sold down the river by this Government, with no program of compensation put in place for them.

In the Okanagan, there are 210 farms involved in grape growing, comprising some 1,400 acres and accounting for gross receipts in excess of \$10 million a year. It is a fledgling industry. When the California wine industry was at the same stage of development, the U.S. Government saw fit to provide protection for it against competition from Europe. We in this country have decided that our fledgling wine industry is to be sacrificed on the altar of free trade. That is unacceptable.

The B.C. wine industry is a part of the future of the Okanagan. It plays a major role in terms of both tourism and agriculture. It is a necessary part of the romance of the Okanagan Valley. It is something that those travelling through the Okanagan can enjoy. In my riding alone, there are eight wineries, all of which are threatened by the Free Trade Agreement. We produce good wines. They are wines that should be available here in Parliament, in preference to French wines. We should be selling our B.C. wines here in the halls of Parliament.

**Mr. McDermid:** I can tell the Hon. Member that Canadian wines are available in the parliamentary dining room, and at the various social functions held by the Parliament of Canada. I invite him to go to the parliamentary dining room to see the number of good Canadian wines that are available.

**Mr. Whittaker:** I would like to see more of our good Canadian wines available within these hallowed halls.

**Mr. Beatty:** Surely not in the halls of Parliament.

**Mr. Whittaker:** Mr. Chairman, I have here in my hand a letter from a grape grower in Summerland, British Columbia, the owner of El Racimo Vineyards. In his letter, this person states:

The problem is quite simple to delineate. Once I have to pull out the grape vines on my land I am stuck! I will have 10 acres with a mortgage and family to support. No income. No job. No retraining program. No viable means of relocating to find employment with the debt load that I will have to sustain. No alternate crop. No means of disposing of my property (there being little demand for farm property in the Okanagan Valley nowadays). No money (since the bank wants the compensation package to protect its equity in the property).

This individual is not the only one who has this type of concern. Reference was made earlier this evening to a gentleman in the Summerland area who could not get funding, a gentleman by the name of Bill Summers. In fact his plight was raised in the House during the last

*Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement*

Parliament. Because of the shortened process, he was not allowed to appear before the legislative committee.

Mr. Summers telephoned me before I left for Ottawa, requesting that he be permitted to appear before the parliamentary committee studying the Bill. He wants to tell Members of Parliament how unfair the Free Trade Agreement is, and of the uncertainty it holds for the grape growers in the Okanagan Valley.

**Mr. McDermid:** Tell us about the GATT decision.

**Mr. Whittaker:** I would be pleased to tell you about the GATT decision. The Free Trade Agreement was signed in October; the GATT decision came down in December.

**Mr. McDermid:** When was the GATT panel struck?

**Mr. Whittaker:** That is the situation with respect to GATT. Under the present structured compensation package, this gentleman will receive substantially less than he would normally make. The compensation package that has been put together by this Government doesn't do the job for farmers. Certainly the fact that the compensation package is what it is reflects the fact this Government has not done a proper research job.

The compensation package provides that farmers will be paid approximately \$1,100 to pull out their vines, with \$7,000 being provided to plant new vines. They are told that they have to upgrade, and they know that they have to upgrade. But, in order to get the upgraded grapes into their orchards, they will have to incur a cost of \$11,500 an acre. Right off the bat, they are into a negative position.

That is not the crowning point. It takes approximately five years to get those vines into full production. What do these people do for a living while they are awaiting a yield from the upgraded crop? Do they simply sit on their thumbs? Will this Government provide them with financial assistance? Our grape growers are placed in an untenable position.

I had occasion to speak to one farmer recently, an individual who was over 50 years of age, and he said to me: "What am I going to do? I have put every penny I have into this farm. I have equipment that isn't good for anything but growing grapes. Some of my land isn't viable for anything but grapes. What do I do? If I switch to apples, I lose the investment I have in my equipment."

That is the effect the Free Trade Agreement has on the grape growers in my region. The soft fruit growers