

The Address—Mr. C. Lapointe

What are we to say now about the supplementary Canada-Quebec farm development agreement which the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion has signed with the Quebec government? The purpose of this agreement is, for instance, to improve farm lands in the Montreal region and to encourage land redistribution in eastern Quebec, Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean and Abitibi-Témiscamingue. This agreement calls for some \$62 million in federal contributions over a period of six years.

Still in the agricultural area, I would like to take a closer look at the dairy industry which is of capital importance to Quebec farmers. Indeed, in 1977-78, 75 per cent of Quebec farmers drew at least 60 per cent of their revenues from dairy products. The federal government is aware of that and has considered and still considers it to be most important. But there again, Mr. Speaker, I prefer to refer to that study by the Quebec government entitled *A propos de l'association économique Canada-Québec* and I want to quote from pages 150 and 151 the following excerpt:

It can be said that federal programs for the dairy industry are less varied than those for grain growing. Indeed, they consist almost exclusively of transfer payments to dairy producers. So the prime concern of the federal dairy policy remains the support of producers' income and marketing techniques play a lesser role than for grain. On the other hand, the dairy industry comes under a highly protectionist policy under which it enjoys privileged access to the Canadian market; the importance of liquid milk and most dairy products is subject to a quota system; certain processed products enjoy more than high custom protection (dairies, for example).

From the strict point of view of Quebec dairy producers, it would be difficult to say that the federal government's dairy policy has an unfavourable impact: nearly half the amounts spent on that policy between 1960 and 1976 were paid in Quebec, particularly in the form of payments to producers; not only did this amount represent a considerable addition to the revenues of Quebec producers, but since the creation of the CDC—

—the Canadian Dairy Commission—

—their total income has increased even more rapidly than that of Ontario producers. In addition, the Quebec milk processing industry enjoyed custom and other forms of protection. That industry sells about 25 per cent of its production to the rest of Canada and only 2 per cent abroad. However, it holds a privileged position (about 40 per cent of the added value) in the Quebec food and beverage industry.

Since in that study made by the Quebec government statistics on dairy policy did not go further than 1976, I thought it would be important and interesting to mention what happened in 1977-78. In that financial year, the federal government paid in direct subsidies to Quebec producers \$128 million or 48.6 per cent of total payments to dairy producers in Canada. It means, Mr. Speaker, that in 1977-78 Quebec dairy producers received 52 per cent of federal milk subsidies, that is to say an amount of \$238 million.

As concerns its contribution to the Canadian food assistance program to developing countries the province of Quebec also got its full share. In 1977-78, the Canadian International Development Agency, through the Canadian Dairy Commission bought 53.4 million tons of butter and 236.9 million tons of powdered milk in the whole country. Of those purchases, 95

per cent of the butter and 84 per cent of the powdered milk came from Quebec. Agriculture is a rather important sector of the Quebec economy and the federal government is determined to maintain its assistance to Quebec farmers.

I might continue along the same line, Mr. Speaker; as concerns grain transportation, the Parti Québécois keeps accusing us of sending all the money out west and always fails to mention that, when we invested \$100 million to help western farmers ship their grain and asked the Canadian Wheat Board and western producers to build hopper cars with those \$100 million, they always fail to say that Quebec, that is to say Canadian Vickers, Marine Industries or Bombardier, gets a large part of the money for those railway cars.

The same thing holds true for VIA Rail, Mr. Speaker, since a \$115 million contract was awarded by the federal government to Bombardier for the design and construction of a new, state of the art, LRC train. I could say much more on the economy, but I think that some of my colleagues want to take part in this debate, Mr. Speaker. I also think that the deceitful referendum question asked by the Parti Québécois calls for only one answer: no, no to this dream, no to the adventure that this party wants to take us on. And this No vote, Mr. Speaker, is the only positive action we can take at this point in time. As His Excellency the Governor General mentioned in the throne speech, a No vote in the referendum, a no to the question asked by the Parti Québécois is a Yes vote for the renewal of federalism in Canada.

● (2120)

[English]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Blaker): Order, please. Ordinarily I would recognize the hon. member for Joliette (Mr. La Salle) who has sought the eye of the Speaker, but in view of the hour, and with the consent of the hon. member for Joliette, we would understand that he will be the first to speak tomorrow, and with the consent of hon. members I will see the clock as 9.30.

An hon. Member: There is no debate tomorrow.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Blaker): He will be the first to speak on the next occasion for debate on the address in reply.

Mr. Nielsen: Mr. Speaker, I understand the debate is being adjourned, but we have five minutes tonight for the hon. member.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Blaker): As I said earlier, if the hon. member for Joliette (Mr. La Salle) would like to take the floor for the remaining five minutes, obviously it is his right to do so.

[Translation]

If the hon. member for Joliette wishes to begin his speech, he may do so.

Hon. Roch La Salle (Joliette): Mr. Speaker, I frankly admit that I have barely enough time to greet and congratulate you