

*The Address*

situation which has not changed whereby the constitution of the United States still permits the Congress to overrule, at virtually any moment, any international agreement that its president and administration has signed.

• (1035)

Given that the constitution has not changed and their waivers continue, how can he say that we have in fact received an improvement? If we did, why are we now negotiating rather than insisting upon our rights for barley and wheat sales into the United States, one of the highest priced markets for those products, largely because the U.S. insists on sucking its own market dry with its export enhancement program which has created a marvellous opportunity for our product to rush in at a good price?

**Mr. Goodale:** Madam Speaker, I appreciate both the comment made by the previous member and the question just asked by the member from my home province of Saskatchewan.

With respect to the situation prevailing at this present moment the short answer to the member's question is that the new regime under GATT has not yet come into effect. The implementation date is July 1995, so the benefits we hope to achieve and that I mentioned in my speech will be forthcoming after implementation. I would dearly love to see those benefits come in advance but unfortunately we cannot get them until the process actually gets into place.

On the question of whether we have given up our ability to have import controls under article XI where other countries have not given up corresponding things, the facts are that all countries have surrendered their rights to have those kinds of border restrictions. In Canada those restrictions related to our supply managed sectors under the auspices of article XI.

In the United States it is the section 22 waiver under the U.S. agricultural adjustment act. In Europe it is the system of variable levies. In Japan and Korea it is the limitation system they had with respect to rice. All those methods previously used as non-tariff barriers will no longer be permissible in future under the new GATT once it is implemented in 1995. All of us have surrendered something in that regard, getting instead this system of comprehensive tariffication.

Will there be aberrations along the way? Undoubtedly so. We will have to be vigilant, to watch out, to make sure that this playing field is as level as it possibly can be. One thing we do have to assist us in that regard now, or when the GATT is implemented, is a new world trade organization which should be

a substantial improvement over the ad hoc and undisciplined system that used to exist in the past.

**Mr. Myron Thompson (Wild Rose):** Madam Speaker, last year many barley growers in and around my riding enjoyed the freedom of an open continental barley market. For the first time in many years this free enterprise was working and they were very pleased with it. Although this lasted only for a short time, farmers were able to increase their sales by a huge margin.

I would like to know if the Minister of Agriculture could explain to us why this opportunity no longer exists and if it will be open again in the near future, as the barley growers are anxiously waiting.

**Mr. Goodale:** Madam Speaker, I am fully aware that opinion in some parts of western Canada is very sharply divided upon the method of marketing barley.

• (1040)

The short answer to the member's question as to why the system is no longer in place as it was temporarily in place in the latter part of 1993 is simply that the previous government proceeded by a method which the courts ruled to be beyond the government's jurisdiction. The courts ruled that the process undertaken by the previous government was in fact contrary to law.

In terms of whether the system ought to be revisited or reviewed in the future, some in western Canada are proposing the idea of a plebiscite on the issue. The matter of a producer plebiscite can be considered in due course. However, I would caution members against rushing too quickly toward that conclusion. That is because plebiscites sometimes are not quite as simple and clean solutions as one might otherwise think.

In this case, for example, I think there would need to be a legislative framework to ensure that the plebiscite was conducted properly. One would need to have some definition of a trigger mechanism to start the process of a plebiscite. One would have to give careful attention to the wording of the question. As the hon. member knows, whether the question is phrased positively or negatively can have a profound impact on the outcome. Then there are the thorny questions like who gets on the voters list, who is entitled to vote on the issue, and whether it is restricted in some way.

There are a good many complexities relating to the question of a plebiscite. I think all of us would want to think it through very carefully before rushing into that as necessarily the right way to go in these circumstances.

[Translation]

**Mr. Laurent Lavigne (Beauharnois—Salaberry):** Madam Speaker, I listened carefully to the speech the Minister of Agriculture just gave. As member for Beauharnois—Salaberry,