

The Address—Mr. Harries

is when they die. This is very true because the economic basis for the agricultural export industry has been destroyed. It has been destroyed in the United States, and in the common market countries as well, because politically in those countries the agricultural segment of the economy has not been left to fend for itself on a free international market. As one drives through the eastern part of France, and sees the technology employed in grain production there, one wonders how there can be any question of France exporting barley competitively with the large-scale, efficient processes employed in parts of our country. One wonders until one realizes that, politically, people in France are considered an important part of the economy and under no circumstances are the economics of free trade going to prevail. This is no different from the situation in most other countries. If this principle is not going to prevail elsewhere, surely it is folly to suppose it can prevail in Canada.

I do not think it makes sense, Mr. Speaker, to permit Canadian agriculture to function on an external basis when virtually all the rest of the economy is functioning on an internal basis. This creates poverty and, in my view, conditions quite out of sympathy with, and inappropriate to, the kind of productivity that we can enjoy in Canada.

• (2:30 p.m.)

It is interesting to look at the gross agricultural statistics and to see that in a recent year we exported about \$1.3 billion worth of agricultural products while we imported almost \$1 billion worth. I am not suggesting that in the rarified atmosphere of cities like Calgary you can grow grapefruit, but I am suggesting that there is a balance in our agriculture that must be struck if proper emphasis is to be placed upon the relationship between agriculture and the rest of the economy. This, essentially, is a closed environment. There must be, I believe, a massive redirection of agricultural effort and this will require not only transfer incentives but also bridge funds, as well as a basic re-alignment of our thinking with respect to the position of agriculture in the Canadian economy. I am sure this can be done and am hopeful, sir, that it will be done with reasonable dispatch; because, as we move forward with an economic program that looks to improvement in all regions of Canada, it seems to me that this must be one of the priorities.

In closing, may I say that this Speech from the Throne in my opinion continues the sound, progressive steps to a united and

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growing Canada first promised by the Prime Minister in June, 1968.

Mr. Jack Cullen (Sarnia): Will the hon. member permit a question. Is it his opinion that the government should sell its equity in Polymer Corporation and utilize the funds or the capital obtained from the sale, or does he think that the government should dispose of a 51 per cent interest and retain a 49 per cent interest in the corporation. Has he thought about this?

Mr. Harries: I believe that the government should sell its equity in Polymer Corporation and that Polymer Corporation should be a normal, joint stock company in Canada. It should be listed on some lively stock exchange like the one at Vancouver. It seems to me that the government should provide the seed stock; but I do not think we should continue to involve ourselves in an enterprise when it is as obviously successful as is Polymer Corporation.

Mr. McIntosh: The hon. member supports free enterprise.

[Translation]

Mr. Louis-Roland Comeau (South Western Nova): Mr. Speaker, I too would like to congratulate the hon. members for Sarnia and Lapointe (Messrs. Cullen and Marceau) on their remarks at the beginning of the debate.

[English]

I am speaking after the hon. member for Edmonton-Strathcona (Mr. Harries) has spoken, Mr. Speaker. It is easy to tell what part of Canada a member comes from by the remarks he makes. One can easily tell that the hon. member is from an urban constituency. Air Canada service does not seem to concern him at all, his attitude being that if Air Canada does not provide a service, some other airline will. His attitude no doubt is the same towards the Canadian National. But those from other parts of Canada, as I shall demonstrate in a moment, have a different attitude.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Comeau: Like many hon. members of parliament, I hear many expressions of goodwill on matters which the government feels are of top priority, such as the lowering of the voting age, concern about the economic and social life of Canada, the extension of Canada's fishing zones, and so on. It is apparent from the Throne Speech that one of the