

Supply

It occurs to me that perhaps there is something wrong with the free trade deal if these guys are so wrong. We think they are wrong too. It seems to me that it is very naive of the government to enter into a free trade deal in which the United States has the full power to implement countervail action and dumping duty action and expect that groups are not going to do it. It seems to me that it is the free trade deal that is wrong.

It is interesting to note that in this case all the American Durum wheat producers have to do is lay a complaint with the International Trade Commission and they can start monitoring and gathering all the information—this is a very expensive business—so that they can launch a countervail action against Canada for their Durum wheat or whatever the arrangement is. We put that amendment forward in the free trade deal so that we would be able to take similar action. We wanted to try to strengthen it, to improve it, but of course it was voted down by the government.

I just wonder if the hon. member from Saskatchewan, whose producers would be equally concerned about the actions taking place, thinks that the free trade deal is wrong not to anticipate these kinds of problems and have remedial actions within it.

Mr. Funk: Mr. Speaker, I thank the non. member for that very excellent question. A member from Saskatchewan should not have forgotten to mention the question of Durum, especially in the southern part of our province which has experienced some very tough years through drought, prices and so on. Durum wheat has been one of the few bright spots in the agricultural picture in Saskatchewan. In fact it amounts to hundreds of millions of dollars worth of crop for Saskatchewan producers.

As the member pointed out, we are now being subjected to harassment, as we are any time we do anything that is effective in trade. The Americans are not interested in fair trade. That is becoming quite clear. As soon as we beat them at something they are harassing us. The whole point, as I understood it, of the free trade deal was that it was supposed to take this harassment out of the system. First, the spirit was supposed to be different. Second, mechanisms existed to shake this harassment that constantly is happening to our farm communities.

I was interested too in the Deputy Prime Minister. He sounded like an opposition member. He is the guy who endorsed this free trade agreement. He is the guy who sold it to people as the answer. Now, a year later, he is crying in Calgary saying that it does not work. I was just hoping that he had made those comments personally and perhaps with even more force to the Minister for International Trade who is in the House and who hopefully is taking these things to heart.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Questions and comments are now terminated on the first ten minutes and five minutes of questions and comments. The next one is the Hon. Member for Mackenzie.

Mr. Vic Althouse (Mackenzie): Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak briefly on the opposition motion today which condemns the government for having jeopardized the future of Canadian agriculture by its ill-conceived trade policies, especially the Canada-U.S. trade deal. There are five points to the motion. In the 10 minutes that I have I will try to speak quickly to each.

The first points out that we were promised by the proponents of the trade deal that this would allow us to gain access to the U.S. market. It is not obvious that there has been any great gain in access to the market. We have seen instead complaints about our exports of Durum wheat into that market. We have seen a countervail lodged against pork producers into that market.

During the period when the trade deal was being debated the proponents of the deal said that one of the things that we could be assured of if we got a Canada-U.S. trade agreement was that there would no longer be countervail actions against pork and hogs. It turned out that they were wrong. Those of us who read the agreement and looked at the U.S. law were quite certain that they would be wrong. The words were there. In fact, if anything the words strengthened the U.S. position and the U.S. power to countervail provided them with an opportunity under the new U.S. trade law to countervail against the secondary product, namely the pork which had previously been seen to be a separate commodity from hogs.

Now under a new U.S. trade law pork is deemed to be simply a byproduct of hogs. If there are subsidies going to the production of hogs, then it is thought that those subsidies apply to the production of pork. Therefore the pork is countervailable. So far, and we are right at the last stage, it looks as if we have lost that countervail argument.