

*Supply*

departments control the export of our farm products, because it often happens that officials in trade missions do not know our farm products. I am convinced that there is none better qualified than the Department of Agriculture to sell our products in other countries or convince them of the quality of these products.

I would like to deal briefly with marketing because the agricultural sector's efficiency depends on marketing which can provide adequate income for our farmers.

I would like to raise another point which, I think, could help us provide more protection for our farmers. We all know that several distributors or wholesalers in Canada have packaging permits, and they often lower the quality of the products by picking the top quality products and selling the rest in other containers.

I would therefore suggest to the minister that repackaging permits be prohibited since the Department of Agriculture has in recent years made funds available to farmers for the establishment of repackaging, classifying, washing and distribution facilities. Mr. Chairman, I think that if we want to keep these centres, which have proved efficient and which will serve all farmers who can use them, then we will have to implement stiff regulations to protect these investments and ensure compliance with Department of Agriculture regulations.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to touch upon the explosive issue of farm credit. More and more Canadian farmers are being asked to mechanize at the same rate as the rest of the world.

● (2100)

One thing for sure, agricultural producers have perhaps not been treated fairly when they have asked for financing. I would suggest to the hon. minister that our farmers be increasingly treated as businessmen or industrialists, and I shall tell him why. More and more, when a Canadian industry wants to reinvest or use its profit for its business, it is given tax rebates.

In agriculture, Mr. Chairman, every time a farmer makes a profit he does not enjoy the same tax privileges or advantages which, in my opinion, would greatly encourage producers to reinvest in the farming industry without having always to depend on government subsidies, and they would then be able to become more independent and more productive. In my opinion, this would be one of the ways to provide incentives which could help the Department of Agriculture meet its objective of having Canada play its role of feeding the developing countries.

Mr. Chairman, I strongly urge the hon. minister to examine this problem so that once and for all our farmers may be treated as businessmen and receive the same tax exemptions, provided they reinvest their profits in the farm or in agricultural improvements to increase their productivity, which would

result in better products on the market and acceptable prices for all consumers.

Mr. Chairman, we all know that the role of the agricultural producer is to feed the consumer, but not at any price. Of course, I agree that the cost of each product must be taken into account. We should not be shocked if the prices of agricultural products increase occasionally. We should stop harassing politically and economically the same 5 per cent of our population by always asking them to make sacrifices to feed the whole country. I am not shocked when the price of a dozen eggs, a bag of potatoes or a quart of milk goes up from time to time; I believe that everything is going the same way in this world and that the price of everything must rise, and I agree with all hon. members that we must still maintain a high rate of productivity.

I believe that, by providing strong incentives, we can maintain this high productivity which has always been typical of Canadian agriculture, and I am proud to repeat this evening, Mr. Chairman, that Canadian agriculture is among the most productive in the world, and I want Canadian producers to be aware of this fact.

I would now like to deal with the processing sector. We all know that, because of the cost of energy, fertilizers, manpower, farm investment, and so on, we no longer have the right to throw away lower quality products which are rejected following an inspection. I hope that the minister will examine this problem today and that we will build more processing plants in this country to make greater use of lower quality products which are often put aside or simply thrown away. We cannot tolerate such a thing in view of all the costs and all the energy needed to harvest these products which cost just as much as first grade products.

Therefore I invite the Department of Agriculture to give serious consideration to that problem. Mr. Chairman, I should also like to deal with climatology, a field where I think we lack development in this country because we have so few experts in climatology. I remember that all summer long the opposition referred to the drought in western Canada. They said that it would bring about higher costs for food, that we would have less abundant crops.

However, I think that in a vast country like Canada, Mr. Chairman, a more developed climatological service would be absolutely necessary because last summer, as we know, while there was a drought in Saskatchewan and in Manitoba, Quebec and the maritime provinces were flooded. Mr. Chairman, I think we can help our farm producers by offering them a much more sophisticated climatological service in order to enable them to plan their crops a little more.

I would not want to overlook the inspection service, Mr. Chairman. The Canadian inspection service is truly outstanding given the fact that the high quality of our products is acknowledged throughout the world. Our inspection service