

to the economics of agriculture and the needs of the consumer, Canada could be a happier nation both agriculturally and as a group of consumers. This should be the objective of the Government of Canada. It is the objective of the people on this side of the House. It could, it should, it must be accomplished.

**Mr. Mark Rose (Fraser Valley West):** Mr. Speaker, I was impressed by the member for Lincoln (Mr. Higson) who spoke earlier and also by the member who has just resumed his seat. It would be redundant of me to try to repeat some of the things they said, but in spite of our ideological differences there seems to be a great deal of agreement between us in terms of what I believe and in terms of the definition of the problems.

It seems to me, and I know the minister always listens attentively to every speech, even when he is signing letters—he is ambidextrous in that way—that the minister would do well to listen to the plaintive voices of rural Canada, because if the minister would take a brief glance at the electoral map he would see that his party enjoys very little confidence from rural Canada. I think one of the reasons for this is that, whether it is a fair image or not, there is a feeling abroad, particularly in rural Canada, that the government under the Liberals does not really care about the problems of rural Canada.

I am not saying I allege this. I certain would not say that. But it must be a viewpoint when one considers that the strength of the governing party in rural Canada is something which they need to improve. We have all kinds of excursions into the four parts of the country, such as British Columbia, where the crop of successful political candidates is probably not of their party. As a matter of fact, so bad at the moment is their score in this regard that one must wonder whether the Liberal Party is indigenous to any part of this country west of Winnipeg.

I would be delighted to blame the Liberal Party for all of the problems facing my riding, Mr. Speaker. But I really cannot do that; not only because the Minister of Finance (Mr. Turner) is a charming and diligent gentleman, but because one of the problems which exists in my riding stems from the fact that we are close to a large city. The reason that the large city of Vancouver extends up into my constituency, with its suburban intrusion, is that the policies of the Liberal government have forced people into the cities and obliged them to abandon agricultural pursuits in large numbers.

Instead of being independent and self-reliant men, successful and affluent in the agricultural industry, for which this country is so capably gifted and suited, they have had to become the new serfs in the high rises. The reason for this is that we have had a very negative attitude toward agriculture, in my opinion and in the opinion of many others, and I think the government would do well to consider very seriously representations put forward with great sincerity by people from rural ridings on this side of the House or, for that matter, from the government side of the House. I am sure the minister does listen. I am not sure what he does after he listens; that is the part that causes me a little uneasiness.

Mr. Speaker, my riding does not depend upon its agricultural industry to the extent it did, because of the

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urban intrusion. But more than that, the urban intrusion has come about for the reasons I suggested earlier and also because of the fact that farm income is not sufficient to overbalance the value of the land. No matter how you do it, such as the government of British Columbia with its zoning or its Bill 42, its land freeze, it is all very well to freeze the land and prevent subdivisions, but if there is no income from that land then you trap the farmer on the land and he can do very little with it and becomes almost an indentured peasant.

So I think the minister and the House would agree that is it important that if a person is to be maintained as a farmer, if we are going to have an agricultural industry, it is implicit that there be some reward for the labours of that man in his chosen field, which happens to be agriculture—no pun is intended. Therefore parliament must ensure, through the kind of legislation which we discuss here, that farm income increases. Farm income increases when farmers sell things. What we have in this bill is a proposal by the government that for certain products—as a matter of fact, for all fruits and vegetables, fresh and canned—we will remove the tariffs for one year.

There seems to be in most people's minds a contradiction between what is good for the consumer and what is good for the producer and, as many people have observed, you cannot have it both ways. How can you have higher income for the producer and lower consumer prices? That is a conundrum, and I am certain that it bothers the minister no end as well.

● (1630)

I think one of the results of the Canadian seasonal disadvantage is that we must pay higher prices for our agricultural products as compared with our neighbours to the south. It seems to me that we either want to preserve the agricultural industry or we do not. The agricultural industry, like any other, does not make rapid adjustments to short-term plans, and we have here what I would call a short-term solution or at least a short-term attempt at providing cheaper consumer prices.

Canada is already a net importer of food—and I am not talking about oranges and bananas; I am talking about food that we produce here. What can we expect of our agricultural industry when people who have made substantial investments for barns, equipment, feed, fertilizer and other things find, as the horticultural council suggested here on February 19, that their viable industry is threatened as a result of their protection being wiped out from under them without warning?

I know the minister has made an adjustment in respect of tomatoes, and I think he reacted well to the problem in respect of the import of cherries; but these types of problems are typical of those faced by the Canadian fruit and vegetable industry all the time. You do not have to take my word for that; spokesmen for farm and horticultural groups have been reiterating this fact for years.

We do have a problem in our country as a result of our short season. Our crops mature later than those in California and Mexico, and when we import tail-end crops from those countries just at the time our crops are maturing, our industry is unable to command the best price. This is not technically dumping when these products are