

Supply

agri-food sector in Quebec, all those who speak on behalf of those producers, that is *La terre de chez nous*. What are we told with respect to the results of 13 months of Government? We were told on September 4: "We have been given a clear mandate by the people of Canada." On September 4, Canadians told us: "We trust you, go ahead!" And they give a rough interpretation of that mandate. They even suggested earlier this week that such a mandate gave them the power on the one hand to liberally distribute billions of dollars to a few multinationals and on the other hand to take that money from the pockets of small-and medium-income consumers, small-and medium-income Canadians, small-and medium-income taxpayers.

Those facts that you are spreading around, that you keep repeating, they also are true in the case of the agri-food sector. And to return to what I was referring to, the article in *La terre de chez nous* of August 22nd, I quote the following:

Conservatives—an assessment. What they promised.

To my knowledge, your party's official spokesman in Quebec, was the Hon. Member for Joliette (Mr. LaSalle). And what I am quoting is actually the full and word-for-word text of the commitments made by Mr. LaSalle at that time, at a meeting held in Longueuil on August 22nd, before a gathering of over 300 people.

Mr. La Salle said, and I quote:

In order to live, one has to eat, and we have realized that.

Mr. La Salle promised that his party would only establish a stabilization insurance program after getting Quebec's agreement. I do not have to answer that question, you know as well as I do. You passed that legislation, relying on your vast majority, although all those concerned in Quebec, without exception, would have absolutely nothing to do with that most incredible Bill.

The Hon. Member for Joliette made commitments, as I said, concerning the \$13 million. He also made formal commitments regarding a number of measures, namely the long-term dairy policy. And they summarize the commitments made by the Hon. Member for Joliette, what they say they did, and to make an assessment, here is what they say, with reference to the month of August, and I quote:

Early in the month, in the Beauce area, on the occasion of the opening of the 17th Regional Exhibition, Conservative MP Gilles Bernier issued a release entitled "No sooner said than done". The Progressive Conservative Government is fulfilling its commitments to farmers.

Now the Hon. Member for Beauce (Mr. Bernier) has spoken in exactly the same terms as the Minister a few moments ago and he said that 14 out of 16 commitments had been implemented in connection with a series of lesser measures. This has enabled me to learn a number of things. However, I will tell you what the UPA thinks of those lesser measures disclosed by the Hon. Member for Beauce and I will

quote Mr. Proulx, the director primary responsible for the UPA:

Among the things done by the Tories, the important ones are the real stakes, where the future of agriculture will be determined. They can very well give us 200 trinklets, but if you are unable to—

● (1650)

—what difference does it make? This is what Mr. Proulx is saying after this Government has been in power for a year.

Mr. Proulx says: "Trinklets, that is what you have given us. And what does farming in Quebec need? Concrete responses to serious problems.

Considering that my time is running out, I would like to point out immediately that problems dealing with farming in Quebec have not only remained unsettled but have been dragging on and unfortunately we do not see any possibility of solving them. That is for the past. But I am also concerned about the future, for it looks just as bad. During his remarks, the Minister indicated that he was considering with much interest the possible opening up of our market, adding that free trade between Canada and the United States was an interesting concept, given the fact that we export for several dozens of million dollars of goods to the United States.

The Minister is taking for granted that the elimination of trade barriers between Canada and the United States would open new markets for our farm exports. I find his attitude both disturbing and dangerous. And as evidence of this danger which is hanging over our heads, I should like to use the example of the hog production which the Minister of Agriculture himself used a few months ago. He then said: Listen, we cannot give you the \$13 million, because if we did, we would face reprisals from the United States. Then, the dairy policy which is the envy of some 10, 20, or 30 countries throughout the world is subsidized.

On the basis of an argument such as the one put forward by the Minister of Agriculture, I am afraid that the announcement of the dairy policy which the Government was supposed to make last August and which has been postponed until early next year will include cuts in the subsidies currently being paid to dairy producers, because the Government feels that these cuts are necessary if we want to be able to export our farm production to the U.S. markets which it is so interested in and which are huge indeed.

Yet, I can tell you, based on consultations which I have had with people that are knowledgeable in this field, that abolishing trade barriers would be extremely risky, and the experts I met last summer told me that we would soon witness the failures of several thousands small businesses involved in egg, hog and milk production. I can hardly believe that this is the road the Minister of Agriculture is tempted to follow.

To conclude, let me tell you this: You have been elected with a very clear mandate. Deliver the goods as promised to those