

Export and Import Permits

our surplus agricultural products on a long term basis, based on the cost of production in Alberta.

I should like to refer to the recently signed agreements with Japan with regard to pork. The price negotiated in the last contract has been approximately 56 cents a pound, basis packers in Edmonton. The domestic price of pork is approximately 37 cents a pound. So we see that it is a real advantage to those farmers who are fortunate enough to have signed this contract to sell their product at a better price than they can get in this country. However, if in six months from now the position is reversed and we find the producers of pork not supplying the Canadian market, does that mean that we will have to limit our exports on the long term contracts which we have signed?

We might also consider the fertilizer industry. In my riding of Pembina there are two fertilizer plants, and there is another one in Calgary. The fertilizer plants are dependent on other markets than Canada, and there are many reasons for this. For a number of years, the price of farm products such as grain has been so low that it has not been economical for farmers to buy fertilizer. But all of a sudden, because of the increase in the price of grain, farmers now have money and are placing orders at the plants for fertilizer which will probably be in excess of their production. But if we curtail that export to the United States, we will damage the long term contracts which they have. We must also remember that the phosphorus rock which is used in the manufacture of fertilizer comes from Florida. I wonder what kind of a response we would get from that state if we were to forbid the export of fertilizer to the United States.

I should like to mention also rapeseed. When the government became so concerned last fall that there would not be enough protein in Canada, they put a ban on the sale of rapeseed. I cannot for the life of me understand why we would ban the export of a product that was in surplus supply in this country. Only a limited amount of rapeseed can be used in animal feeds. There is a type of acid in that seed which makes it unsuitable for livestock feed, and we could have moved it out of the country had we chosen not to limit its export.

To go to another matter—and I am sure this is a tragedy which the livestock industry in Canada will remember for a long time—let me point out that through no fault of their own the producers of beef have been put into the position of losing thousands and thousands of dollars. The House will recall that black Monday in September when the government announced that the controls on the price of beef would be dropped. There was confusion in all the markets in Canada and it was the first time in history that the public stockyards in Canada were closed. Imports were coming in on a day to day basis, and all of a sudden we used the DES argument to keep American cattle out of Canada.

I should like to say that in exceptional cases, such as in the case of beef when the deliberate action of another government caused problems which we now have in the cattle industry, some import controls are certainly necessary. I think that those controls should have been applied earlier so that the industry might have had an opportunity to adjust and perhaps partly rectify the international situation that has developed.

[Mr. Hollands.]

When we talk about imports and exports we must realize that Canada must be an exporting country and that we must be prepared to honour our long term commitments regarding the export of our products. Closing our doors one year and opening them another could only damage the long term prospects for the export trade upon which we depend so greatly. I hope this bill will receive careful examination in committee and that changes will be made in it to ensure there will be no restriction of production in Canada.

● (1620)

Motion agreed to, bill read the second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Finance, Trade and Economic Affairs.

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ENVIRONMENTAL CONTAMINANTS ACT**MEASURES TO PROTECT HUMAN HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT FROM CONTAMINATING SUBSTANCES**

Hon. Jack Davis (Minister of the Environment) moved that Bill C-3, to protect human health and the environment from the release of substances that contaminate the environment, be read the second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Forestry.

He said: Mr. Speaker, Bill C-3 is an important piece of legislation. Passed into law it will become an important weapon in the government's armoury for dealing with pollution. Described as the Environmental Contaminants Act, it will set up a screening process. It will ensure that man-made substances will be checked out thoroughly before they are produced in this country and sold to an unsuspecting public.

We are, all of us, concerned about the quality of life. This new law will give the federal government the power not only to ask for, and get information about, substances which may be harmful to the environment, but also to take steps to control their use. Some products may also be banned. The idea is that artificial or unnatural substances should be spotted well ahead of time. They should not be sold in large numbers or vast quantities and broadcast around the country before we know what their environmental effects are likely to be. They should be checked over carefully before they are scattered around and before the cost of recovery and recycling gets out of hand.

Obviously we are moving into a preventative phase of our war against pollution. We are moving ahead of events rather than following in their wake. Bill C-3 is designed to stop pollution before it starts. Our new Environmental Contaminants Act will put us into the business of prevention rather than cure. We will not have to go around picking up non-degradable plastics after they have been produced and sold in their millions; we will make sure that they are not manufactured or imported in the first place.

With this new law on our statute books we shall be in a position to demand information, not only about substances already in use in this country but also about products in their early developmental stages as well. Data about their chemical characteristics, their biological qualities and