

Adjournment Debate

The problems facing fresh apple producers in Canada is one of both price and world overproduction. During their extensive hearings, it was demonstrated time after time that the major predicament facing Canadian growers is one of price. In 1989 the average producer received 9.5 cents for apples that cost him over 14 cents a pound to produce, a tough way of doing business.

The Farm Products Council has accepted the recommendations of the producers. I would like to just very quickly go over those, Mr. Speaker. They are a very excellent group. They address the concerns that Canadians have about marketing agencies and speak very well to them.

First, this system would ensure reasonable returns to efficient producers. There will be a high level—one-third of apple imports into Canada. Quota will have no value. There will be no shortage of apples due to supply management. There will be incentives for growers to produce high quality apples of the varieties wanted by Canadian consumers.

• (1830)

The agency will be oriented toward promoting the demand for apples and is in strict compliance with the terms and conditions of GATT and the free trade agreement.

My question to the government is this. When is the government going to begin to put into motion the recommendations of the Farm Product Marketing Council and the vast majority of Canadian apple growers, and take immediate steps to launch a national marketing agency for fresh apples for the benefit of all Canadians?

Mr. Murray Cardiff (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, in response to the hon. member, at the request of apple growers, the National Farm Products Marketing Council began an inquiry into the merits of establishing a national apple marketing agency. The report of the council was released on May 8, 1991. Although the report recommends the eventual establishment of a national apple agency with all of the powers under section 22 of the Farm Products Marketing Agencies Act, there are a number of steps which remain to be taken before an agency can be proclaimed.

These steps include the development of a more detailed marketing plan and the need to take into account the principles of second generation supply

management, as well as Canada's international trade obligations.

The development and implementation of an effective national apple agency will require the close co-operation and participation of provincial governments as well. To ensure that the views of the provinces are taken into account early in the process, the minister initiated discussions with them and has asked for input from the apple producing provinces on the report of the council. This includes New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Quebec, Ontario and British Columbia.

The Minister of Agriculture has also requested input from the Minister of Industry, Science and Technology, the Minister for International Trade and the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs on the implications for Canada's trade obligations and the processing sector, as well as the impact on consumers.

Only after consultations with provincial governments and cabinet colleagues, will the government be in a position to provide further direction to the National Farm Products Marketing Council and the apple growers on the next steps in the process.

I think the member would agree that those processes have to be followed.

In the meantime, we would encourage apple growers to continue their efforts toward developing an improved apple marketing system. It was recognized by growers during the inquiry that there are a number of issues which must be addressed by apple growers to improve their marketing system. These include information systems, apple pricing, promotion and trade data. Agriculture Canada has provided \$50,000 in financial support to the apple committee of the Canadian Horticulture Council and to assist in analyzing the problems with the present marketing structures and to assess options and make recommendations for incorporation into the development of a long-term marketing strategy for Canadian apples.

This information will be of great benefit to the industry in planning for the future.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted.

[Translation]

The House stands adjourned until 11 a.m. tomorrow, pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

The House adjourned at 6.32 p.m.