

DEATH OF FORMER PREMIER

INQUIRY WHETHER FLAGS WILL BE FLOWN AT HALF-MAST DURING STATE FUNERAL FOR MR. RENÉ LÉVESQUE

Mrs. Carole Jacques (Montreal—Mercier): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Deputy Prime Minister. At a time when Quebec is mourning the sudden loss of a truly exceptional man, René Lévesque, the illustrious defender of the French language who has made us proud to be Quebecers, I would like to know whether he can give the House the assurance that flags will be flown at half-mast tomorrow during Mr. Lévesque's state funeral, as a last tribute?

[*English*]

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister, President of the Privy Council and President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, yes, I can give that assurance. The Prime Minister has personally requested that the flags on all federal government buildings throughout Canada be flown at half-mast tomorrow, the day of the funeral. The Hon. Member should know as well that, consistent with tradition, flags on federal government buildings in the Province of Quebec have been flying at half-mast.

Mr. Speaker, you will know that I contacted you early this morning and I asked that the appropriate moment of silence be observed tomorrow, the day of the late René Levesque's funeral, out of respect for him and the people of the Province of Quebec and Canada.

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[*Translation*]

TRADE

CANADA-UNITED STATES FREE TRADE AGREEMENT—FARMERS' FUTURE—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Hon. Jean Lapierre (Shefford): Mr. Speaker, I want to get back to the Minister of Agriculture. He asked us to look at reality, to look at the facts. I may remind him that on Monday, his official translator, the Minister of State, had a chance to do exactly that when he met with 1,800 farmers in Victoriaville, where they told him their future was in jeopardy.

I want to ask the Minister of Agriculture why he has been misleading farmers by telling them that agriculture would never be affected, and why it now takes three pages in his agreement to say that farming will not be affected.

[*English*]

Hon. John Wise (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, those statements attributed to me are absolutely and completely false. Let me respond in this way, and perhaps the Hon. Member might understand. If we did not have secure access to the U.S. market for Canadian hogs, a large percentage of which are produced in the Province of Quebec, then hog production in Canada would be reduced by about one-third.

Oral Questions

That would be completely and totally devastating, not only to Canadian agriculture but to Quebec agriculture as well. Incidentally, the spokespeople for the hog industry are extremely supportive of this agreement.

With respect to another commodity which is very important to Quebec and Canada, cattle, if the Canadian cattle industry did not have access to the U.S. market, then it would shrink by one-third. That would be very devastating to Quebec agriculture and to Canadian agriculture.

I am indicating to the Hon. Member that we want growth in the Canadian agri-food industry. We get growth by getting access to a large market ten times the size of Canada's.

[*Translation*]

PORK PRODUCERS—\$10 SURTAX—MEASURES TAKEN BY GOVERNMENT

Hon. Jean Lapierre (Shefford): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Agriculture is trying to reinvent the wheel. Canadian hogs are already going to American markets, with the Canadian food products and animals that are sold over there. His agreement has done nothing.

I want to ask the Minister, who is talking about hog producers, what his agreement has done about the ten dollar surtax.

[*English*]

Hon. John Wise (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, if anyone thinks that we will have the same trade environment with the United States in the next decade as we have had in the last 20 years, then they are just simply whistling in the dark.

What the hon. gentleman should be doing is standing up to applaud us for maintaining supply management. Some 74 per cent of agriculture in his province is supply managed.

Mr. Lapierre: And you are screwing it up!

Mr. Wise: He should be up commending us for maintaining the underpinnings in supply management. He should also be up complimenting us for maintaining the right in the future for Canadian farmers in his province and the other nine provinces to determine what marketing system best suits their own needs.

In case Members opposite do not know about underpinnings, let me tell them—

Some Hon. Members: Order!

Mr. Wise: —there are two sections in underpinnings. We will see how interested they are.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Wise: They are not interested!

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!