

*Economic Conditions*

**Mr. Flis:** I suggest that some of these members should go and live in other parts of the world. Let them go to live in the Soviet Union for a year. Let them go and live in Poland for a year. Let them know what it is like to be hungry. Let them know what it is like not to have any freedom. Let them know what it is like that there is no freedom to plan an economy, such as we did. Let them go and experience that. Then they will come back to Canada and kiss the ground they stand on. They have no appreciation or patriotism for this great land. What do members opposite do? They discriminate.

● (1150)

I was here last night and I was hurt as a member of this institution when the hon. member for Annapolis Valley-Hants had the gall to discriminate against my heritage. That is stooping a little too low. Those were the kinds of suggestions they were giving this government.

We heard from the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Clark). What were his constructive suggestions? Hate tossed against the Minister of Finance (Mr. MacEachen); that was his suggestion. We heard hate, prejudice and racial prejudice. I am even thinking of taking the comments made by the hon. member for Annapolis Valley-Hants to the Human Rights Commission, because there was outright prejudice and discrimination in this House.

**Mr. Flis:** Then the hon. member for Perth (Mr. Jarvis) had the gall to stand up this morning and say he was speaking for minority rights. I suggest that Canadians with Portuguese, Italian, or Greek backgrounds are also minorities in this country. I ask hon. members, why do you discriminate against them? I am glad the hon. member for Perth had the courtesy to remember the farmers in this whole economic debate. I am glad at least one member opposite had the courtesy and the knowledge to address that situation in our economic package.

The previous Liberal government took initiatives to establish Canagrex under the jurisdiction of the Minister of Agriculture. I ask the member for Perth why, when his government was in power, they disregarded this recommendation totally. If they really have the interests of the farmers at heart, why did they ignore support for an export agricultural company in this country? Bleeding hearts, but no action.

This decision to disregard the Canadian Agricultural Export Corporation by the Conservatives was a gross injustice to our Canadian farmers, especially since Canagrex is designed and will help the agricultural community to export their products and plan on a long-term basis. It would allow them to secure long-term export markets on a contractual basis.

This is a vital necessity to the farmer because, with long-term contracts of up to five years or more, the farmer will at long last achieve some stability in his business which will help him to plan effectively his growth and expansion. Otherwise, without this added stability, how is the farmer to plan his production and purchase the production machinery that is needed?

Can you imagine the risks involved in running a farm? I am a farmer at heart. I was a wheat farmer in Saskatchewan where we had a family farm. I know the problems facing farmers. I worked in Ontario on tobacco farms and know the problems facing Ontario farmers. I think I can give a few lessons to the hon. member for Perth on farming.

Can you just imagine what it is like when a snowstorm could develop in a matter of hours and not only wipe out a crop, but an entire lifetime of building? I know what it is like to borrow money for new production machinery and not know if I would be able to sell my crops on a consistent basis over a number of years to pay back the loan.

Canagrex with its ability to secure long-term contracts will help eliminate many of the high-risk factors in the agricultural industry, thus enabling the primary producers to recover their costs plus a reasonable margin of profit.

The Canagrex concept that was envisioned and developed since 1974 has received much support. In fact, the hon. member for Lambton-Middlesex (Mr. Ferguson) was one of the early proponents of this concept.

Canagrex has not only been called for by the Canadian Federation of Agriculture and the National Farmers Union, but it has also been recognized and supported as a key vehicle by the ten premiers to increase Canada's total food production and expand Canada's export trade. As chairman of the special parliamentary committee on the proposed national trading corporation, I cannot stress this point enough.

If the proceedings of this House had not been interrupted as they were yesterday and today, I would have had the honour of tabling the second report of the special committee on a national trading corporation. Maybe I will have that honour later on this afternoon.

Canadian farmers can presently produce enough food to feed about 55 million people, twice our present population. Canada's agricultural sector has become one of the most effective and productive in the world. Canadians are now exporting well over 70 per cent of their grain production. It is no wonder then that in Canada one job in every four depends on the agricultural food sector. Members opposite seem to think that the only sector in Canada is the oil sector. Well, there are other important sectors of our economy.

Further, the total agricultural exports approached \$8 billion in 1979, agricultural exports strengthened the Canadian economy and supported the value of the Canadian dollar. Canada's international food trade performance has not significantly changed since 1970, but there is room for increased exports because of the lower value of the Canadian dollar and recently negotiated trade concessions. Perhaps the greatest boost to exports has been the lower value of the Canadian dollar which makes not only our food attractively priced but all our goods and services.

When the special committee on a national trading corporation was holding hearings across Canada, one of the witnesses told us that we should not be too concerned when the dollar drops because there is always a positive side effect. It helps