

Canagrex

and has many farmers. There is a lot of concern about the farm economy in the part of the province from which I come, particularly in view of the Farm Bill in the United States and the tremendous subsidies on the export of grain, as well as the European Common Market subsidy program for their farmers and the export of grain from the European Common Market.

I realize that grain sales come under the auspices of the Canadian Wheat Board and Canagrex had no role in grain sales, however, since grain sales are now down in price, although not in volume, many farmers in my area are considering a switch to other crops. Lentils, peas and other crops are now being produced in the Yorkton—Melville area. Since we have not produced many of these crops before, we are trying to break into markets in different parts of the world where Canada has not had markets before. Therefore, there is great concern about the abolition of Canagrex because it was an agency that provided an opportunity to hustle in world markets.

The Hon. Member for Prince Albert (Mr. Hovdebo) sits on the Standing Committee on Agriculture. Since Canagrex has been abolished, can he tell us what alternative there is for the farmer in Norquay where, according to an article in the *Norquay North Star*, farmers are sowing several hundred acres of peas? Those farmers are very concerned that there be a market for those peas. What is the alternative for the farmer in Norquay in terms of a guarantee that when he takes land away from the wheat because of the U.S. Farm Bill he will have a market for the peas that he sows?

What is the Government doing to replace the potential vacuum created by the abolition of Canagrex since it may have been able to find a lot of markets for peas around the world? What is it doing to make sure that the farmer in Norquay, for example, can sell those peas?

I see that my friend, the Hon. Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Epp), is smiling. I think I could even see him nodding his head that he probably agrees with me. He comes from a part of Manitoba where I believe there is the production of sugar-beets and many other commodities.

Mr. Epp (Provencher): Almost everything.

Mr. Nystrom: His area has more versatility in production than much of the Prairies. I know that many people in his area are concerned about whether there is a way to promote these exports around the world. This is a very important question when one considers the protectionism in the United States, western Europe, Japan and other parts of the world.

Mr. Hovdebo: Canagrex had a staff of approximately 70. When it was closed I asked the exact questions posed by the Hon. Member. What will replace Canagrex? In a survey of all the External Affairs posts, Agriculture Canada determined that the number of people who would be devoted to agriculture and commercial promotion was the equivalent of 73 person years. I point out that those 73 person years already existed in addition to those people at Canagrex who were working in this

field. For example, anyone looking for a market in Algiers would contact the second secretary in Algiers and work with him. Canagrex had personnel in the field, but no one replaced them when Canagrex was eliminated.

I also asked what kind of assistance there is for the vetting of contracts to provide assistance to small exporters. The answer was that one could not go to an agency that would do the work or provide the assistance, but had to go to External Affairs or Agriculture Canada or an agency such as the Export Development Corporation, or even to the Department of Regional Industrial Expansion. In other words, one would have to visit several Departments because there was no particular agency to help with such work.

I also asked if the underwriting of transportation costs was available since the dissolution of Canagrex. The Department of External Affairs said that it does not provide the transportation service, underwriting transportation costs or arranging transportation services, which I had suggested in my question. It only facilitates transportation services by advising the potential shippers which carriers may meet their needs. One must find the market and the method of shipping the product by oneself because nothing has been put in place to replace the service.

I received the same answer to all those questions which I put in the committee. Although the response is that there is something in place, the fact is that those things already existed. The idea of Canagrex as an agency which could assist in selling these products more easily was not enhanced at all.

We sell many leaf cutter bees, mostly to Russia. Each producer who wants to sell leaf cutter bees must find their own carrier and must deal with each agency involved. Previously, all this was done by Canagrex.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased this afternoon to rise and deal with this Act to dissolve Canagrex. I wish the House were debating a more pleasant subject, like the creation of Canagrex, but we cannot expect anything perfect from a Conservative Government, because perfect and conservative are terms which just don't go together. The Hon. Member for Brome—Missisquoi (Mrs. Bertrand) is certainly well aware that it is impossible to reconcile them; knowing that she is a newcomer to that political party she probably has much difficulty accepting conservative points of view, which is understandable, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I should like to indicate this afternoon some of the reasons why this Conservative Government is wrong to dissolve Canagrex. First of all, as you will certainly remember, Mr. Speaker, the Conservative Party have made several promises during the last election campaign. As a matter of fact, I remember quite well having brought this matter to your attention on a couple of occasions in the past. I have here a document entitled *Trois cent trente-huit promesses* which lists the 338 promises which the Conservative Party have made,