

Canagrex

Someone else's loss is generally our gain, but that is not the way it should be.

The Hon. Member mentioned the plight of wheat farmers in Saskatchewan in the last year or so who have experienced low prices. They have to face the United States subsidizing its wheat while we are unable to do so. I agree with the Hon. Member when he says that we need Canagrex more than ever before. We could look upon the whole world and develop new markets and ideas for our consumer for agricultural products through Canagrex. We could increase our production and keep not only those who are trying to hang on to farms but we could bring more farmers back to the land. What we need are the markets.

Many countries need our produce. My own Province of Prince Edward Island can always sell potatoes to countries like Argentina, but there is a problem getting Canadian or American money from Argentina because it does not have the funds to pay for the commodities it needs. Canagrex could have been a vehicle in this connection.

Can the Hon. Member comment on why and how Canagrex could have been a vehicle that would have enabled government to government transactions in situations like this, not only to increase our market potential in other areas but to feed what we see is a starving population all over the world? We could have been using Canagrex to open up markets. When you feed a hungry world and you get the Third World developing, you can open up other avenues for trade in other manufactured goods and services, and Canada would be looked upon favourably as a potential customer.

Mr. Nystrom: Mr. Speaker, I agree fully that Canagrex would have been a very important instrument in government negotiations for negotiating long-term trade deals with various countries around the world. China is a very good example. I was in China in 1979. China is extremely important to Saskatchewan not only for grain and potash but for other crops as well. We could have had some pretty good agreements with an agency like Canagrex. The Government has not replaced Canagrex with any more people. I have a survey of the foreign embassies and high commissions for January, 1986. The survey shows that we have personnel equalling 73 person years working to sell food and agricultural products around the world. That is not very much for the most important industry. In the United States we have personnel equalling 12.5 person years; in western Europe we have personnel equalling 23 person years; in eastern Europe we have personnel equalling 5.5 person years; in Africa we have personnel equalling 3.5 person years; in the Middle East we have personnel equalling 4 person years; in Asia, which excludes Japan and China, we have personnel equalling 4.5 person years; in China, it being very important, we have personnel equalling 2.5 person years; in Japan we have personnel equalling 6 person years; and in Latin America and the Caribbean we have personnel equalling 10.5 person years.

We do not have many people promoting this kind of activity for Canadians. That is why Canagrex is so important, because with it we would have had more long-term commitments and contracts and in the process we could have helped feed part of the world as well as supporting the farmers of Canada.

Mr. Redway: Mr. Speaker, I listened to the Hon. Member for Yorkton—Melville (Mr. Nystrom) referring to city members of the Progressive Conservative Party. As a city member I was astounded to hear him say that city members of the Progressive Conservative Party do not understand, are not concerned with and have no feeling for the farmers of Canada. I was particularly astounded because as a city member of the Progressive Conservative Party, and there are many, I and all of the other city members supported whole-heartedly the position of the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) and the position of the Government in bringing down interest rates for the Farm Credit Corporation. This was of big assistance to farmers. I and all of the city members of the Progressive Conservative Party supported the purchase of the grape crops in the past by the Government. I and all the city members of the Progressive Conservative Party supported without fail the dairy farm programs introduced just a short time ago. I and all of the city members of the Progressive Conservative Party supported the \$1 billion assistance to wheat farmers across Canada, a measure that was introduced by the Prime Minister and the Government a few months ago. I and all of the city members of the Progressive Conservative Party supported as well the Government's trade negotiations with the United States and GATT aimed at defining once and for all the subsidy problems so that we could assist farmers in knowing what subsidies were a problem and what subsidies were not a problem and so we could put in place a trade dispute settlement mechanism that would solve farmers' exporting problems once and for all.

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In addition to all of that, I and all of the city members of the Progressive Conservative Party supported the capital gains tax exemption program which has been a big help to western farmers. I was astounded to hear the Hon. Member say that the city members of the Progressive Conservative Party did not understand or support these things.

I would like to know why the city members of the NDP did not support the capital gains tax exemption for western farmers. I would like to know why they are not supporting the trade negotiations that will work out a mechanism to settle trade disputes so that we can help farmers with their exports to other countries. Will the Hon. Member tell us why the city members of his Party are not supporting the farmers of this country?

Mr. Robinson: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I know the Hon. Member would not wish to mislead the House, but I am an urban member of the New Democratic Party and we have spoken out strongly in support of the capital gains tax