

*Canagrex*

Affairs Department for development and promotion of trade? Once again, there is nothing but a blank page. There is no alternative being provided.

At a crucial period in the life of Canadian agriculture, a time when it is fighting for its life to maintain markets around the world and to acquire new ones, the Canadian Government has made a clear and unmistakable decision to pull the props out, to retreat, to withdraw and to recede from those markets. It is absolutely incomprehensible. It defies logic, common sense and intelligence.

At a time when we face this incredible problem around the world, when we face the attack of the U.S. Farm Bill, when we see the kind of export promotion the European Economic Community is doing and when we face incredible pressure on grain trade, knowing that we have to find and develop new markets, why is the Ministry in full retreat? It is in retreat simply for reasons of ideological purity or theological precision. No one can understand the kind of curious motivation which works inside the heads of Tories. However, we do know that Canadian farmers are being left stranded in the international market with no support, no resources and no capacity to compete.

One can only say that eventually Tories will pay the price. We know what is happening in the farm sectors across Canada now. We are aware of the kind of protests that are being raised and of the kind of anger that is being shown. We are aware of the frustration that exists.

This Government came in with a pocketful of promises. Every time the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) saw two farmers at a crossroads he had five more promises to make.

**Mr. Boudria:** Three hundred and thirty-eight altogether.

**Mr. Axworthy:** Three hundred and thirty-eight promises, and the count is still rising. Everywhere there was a promise: "I will do more. I will provide more. I will pay more." But when you get down to the hard reality, it is retreat, withdrawal, elimination.

● (1210)

It is very clear that one of the important elements in developing new international markets is research and development, to develop new products and new strains of commodities. Yet, once again what do we have from the Conservative Government when it comes to agricultural research and development? We have cut back, elimination, close down, shut off. Once again, there is a total contradiction between promise and performance.

We feel it is important to bring to the attention of Canadians the reason we oppose this Bill. This Government is guilty of indifference to the important issue of how Canadian farmers are going to be able to survive and grow in a very tough and competitive international trading environment.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne):** Questions or comments.

**Mr. Foster:** I was interested in the speech by the Hon. Member for Winnipeg—Fort Garry (Mr. Axworthy). He crystalized the whole down-grading which has taken place in agriculture commodities and sales.

If you look through the approximately 20 Tory promises in the 1984 election you will see that a lot of those promises have been broken. Try as you may, nowhere do you find in those Tory promises that they are going to destroy or take away Canagrex from the producers of the less volume commodities.

Clearly, when Canagrex was established there were a lot of commodity groups who looked for support and assistance from the Government. Now they are being dashed by this action to destroy Canagrex. If we look at the promises the Tories made in the 1984 election we see many things, but they certainly did not promise to take away Canagrex.

For instance, they promised to abandon Section 31 of the Income Tax Act to reflect the principles of equity. Even though that was referred to a standing committee, and that committee made a report, no action was taken in that regard. They promised to establish a board of authority to control tobacco production and prices. The passage of that legislation was expedited in one sitting of the House, but still the Government has not passed the necessary Order in Council. They promised to expand the Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Act into a national farm and forestry rehabilitation act. They have never carried out that promise.

It seems to me that the Hon. Member for Winnipeg Fort—Garry has provided an excellent documentation of how the Government makes promises, but does not keep them, and how the Government talks about increasing export sales. The Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) in Prince Albert in July of 1984 said he was going to make Canada a superpower in agriculture commodity sales around the world. We only have to look at what his friend the President of the United States has done, and how he has responded, to see that Canadian farmers have never been put in a worse financial position in their lives. Not since R.B. Bennett was the Prime Minister has the situation been worse than the situation we have today under the present Government. The Hon. Member has made some excellent points. I would just ask him to respond to the questions I have raised.

**Mr. Axworthy:** Madam Speaker, I will be more than happy to go through the Hon. Member's recitation. What he is pointing out very clearly is that the problems that we face do require some very skillful and important forms of government legislation and initiative. It is not sufficient to withdraw the assistance of Government itself. We know full well that the export market in agricultural commodities is one that is shifting quite substantially. The danger posed to many of our agricultural products, because of the Canada-U.S. trade negotiations, is also very serious. Yet what we see happening on the domestic side, in terms of preparation by investing