

research and development in our country. We cannot get around this fact.

Mr. Whelan: I rise on a point of order. I am sure, Mr. Speaker, again, that this hon. member would not want to misinform the House. However, we are very much aware that agricultural extension is a provincial responsibility, although we do get involved federally sometimes. However, if we were to use all the scientific knowledge we have right now concerning soil conservation, proper cultivation and seeds, as well as all our available technology, we could increase grain production on the presently cultivated land in western Canada by 30 per cent in two years. Some farmers are using all of that technology, but it is not getting through to every farmer. Therefore, when we speak about research, there is a tremendous potential for increasing productivity which is not being developed to its fullest because the technology and scientific knowledge is not being used by all.

Mr. Thacker: Yes, that is true. This is the type of exchange of information we should have more frequently between government and opposition members. However, what the minister has not said, although I know he knows it to be true, is that while that technology is not being used, the main handicap in western Canada for the export of the grain is the transportation system. For years and years we have not been able to get an allocation of public moneys federally, or provincially for that matter, to expand the railway system. During past election campaigns the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) has promised doubletracking, but it has never led to a doubletrack.

Mr. Huntington: What are we going to do about the Crow rate?

Mr. Thacker: The real question I wanted to address concerns the setting up of this export corporation. I am not at all convinced in my mind that it is necessary, because Canada is really an importer of foods. I am not saying this for any ulterior motive; Western grain brings in foreign exchange, but considering all the other agricultural products, Canada is not an exporter of food at all, it is an importer. There are many other things we could be doing in the nation to make ourselves self-sufficient before we even begin to discuss exporting.

For example, there are many natural gas lines going out of Alberta and within Alberta, and every few miles there is a compressor station which has as a byproduct the enormous release of energy and heat. Presently that byproduct is simply vented into the air; but at every one of those stations across this whole country, and now reaching into the Atlantic region, we could have three or four acres of tomatoes or cucumbers. That would be something the government and the department could do to recapture energy to produce food.

Mr. Whelan: Flowers.

Mr. Thacker: Every tomato that we produce here rather than importing them from California or Mexico would generate money to circulate in Canada. The multiplier effect is four or five times, and we could generally get going back up the hill

again rather than down the other side, which is where we are now.

Again, rather than putting this money into an export corporation, why could we not allocate our resources to making the farm more efficient? Why have farmers abandoned the tradition of turning their land over to the next generation? I keep repeating this again and again; I am sure the Minister of Agriculture is as tired of hearing it as I am tired of having to say it. However, by doing away with income-averaging annuities and the capital gains reserve, government has genuinely interfered with a very traditional way for farmers to take the land from one generation and give it to the next.

A farmer always cherishes his land. He may be sitting on half a million to \$1 million worth of land, but he does not see himself as being a millionaire. He genuinely sees himself as being a steward of that land. Farmers have this peculiar attitude, which is not generally held, that they want their land to go to the next generation. They get a genuine feeling for the land. I guess that feeling comes from having spent so many years on the land, having dust blown into their eyes. Oftentimes their fathers and grandfathers are lying out in the back corner of the rear forty. The Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources probably has nine generations buried on the land. That gives the farmer a special feeling for the land. By first of all imposing capital gains tax, and then by doing away with these traditional ways of transferring land, we are interfering with that feeling. I believe we will be worse off as a nation when we get down the road and there is nothing left but corporations. Many will probably be Crown corporations. We will not have the same feeling of productivity.

● (1740)

The other day when I said we should not think that we will always be a food exporter, I was very serious. The hon. member for Parkdale-High Park (Mr. Flis) thought I was being facetious and extreme. I was not at all. He should know that his homeland, Poland, was once an enormous exporter of food. It had private ownership of land and the infrastructure for providing farm input, fuel and the grain delivery system.

Poland exported food until the state came in with centrally planned policies. They do not have the land. Over 90 per cent of the land in Poland is still privately owned. However, once the produce leaves the land, it gets into a centrally planned bureaucracy. Poland is now a massive food importer. I am naive enough to believe the reason for that is because of the centrally planned aspect. The bureaucrats are undoubtedly well-intentioned and intelligent. They tend to make decisions about climatic factors and problems. There are so many variables it really makes that impossible. If that were left to a million farmers, they would individually make decisions within the context of their own farms which would lead to a wiser result than the decision made by the central bureaucracy.

We see this every year in Russia. The people there are hard working. On the 2 per cent or 3 per cent of the land they are entitled to, one-acre plots, they produce more than the massive state communal farms. This is because the farms are theirs.