

Canagrex Act

Mr. Mazankowski: He lost another battle in cabinet.

Mr. Schellenberger: Is this small amount of money to be used in setting up Canagrex going to be well spent? The director will probably need two or three secretaries and he will only have a staff of 12. If we consider the 115 world trading missions we have, we will find that in those missions we only have ten agricultural specialists, and we only have one in the Third World where a quarter of our food and grain exports are presently going.

Mr. Whelan: We do not have one in Russia yet and that is our biggest buyer.

Mr. Schellenberger: The world trade missions Canada had around the world in the 1950s and 1960s were the envy of the world. The Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. MacGuigan) is in his seat and I would ask him what has happened to this envy of the world we enjoyed in the 1950s.

Mr. MacGuigan: It is still there.

Mr. Schellenberger: No, it is not, and part of the reason is that the Department of External Affairs has been reorganized and reorganized and we do not have specialists in trade missions around the world with the capacity to sell the produce of this nation.

Mr. MacGuigan: Indeed we do, and we are selling more.

Mr. Schellenberger: The Secretary of State for External Affairs should be asking the Minister of Agriculture to give up this budget of \$4 million in order to place some agricultural specialists in those trade missions with the capacity to sell our products. Then that money might be better spent. That is the way to spend money in a manner which will help the farmers of this nation.

Mr. Whelan: That is not what the United States is doing.

Mr. Mazankowski: You do not follow the States in other policies; why are you suggesting it here?

Mr. Whelan: They followed us on this one. We suggested this one and Bergland put it into practice.

Mr. Schellenberger: The Minister of Agriculture constantly makes speeches, even though he does not rise in his place to defend his department as often as he ought to.

If we look around the world at many of our competitors, we see that they are moving more and more to the use of private export traders in attempting to sell the surplus products their farmers are producing. The same is the case in Australia, which used automatically to purchase all its grain through the Australian Wheat Board. They are now putting into place commission sellers, and if you look at their record you will find they are taking over more and more of what used to be the traditional Canadian market for export sales.

I think we ought to look at this very seriously in committee. We are setting aside only this amount of money to set up a corporation which will attempt to sell the surplus products of this nation. Perhaps we would be far better off to put that

money into the better operation of our trade missions around the world with more expertise to in fact sell our products.

I believe the Minister of Agriculture is losing his grip.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Whelan: Come on over here.

Mr. Schellenberger: It is not just from age either, Mr. Speaker. He wants to have control of the export markets, but the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) has set up this new triumvirate or troika under the control of the Secretary of State for External Affairs. The minister for international trade has been given some responsibility, and I think also the minister for external relations, although none of us really knows what his responsibility involves, is within this triumvirate. I wonder just how long the Minister of Agriculture can hold on to Canagrex before the minister for international trade states that it should really be under his control. Many of us in this House would possibly recommend that, because if he had responsibility for international trading around the world, perhaps he should also have control of whoever Canagrex will be able to hire with its small budget.

I have a little article by Richard Gibbons from *The Manitoba Co-operator* which states in part:

—with a lean budget, Canagrex will be forced to use existing government personnel both in Canada and abroad whenever possible to promote Canadian farm goods.

It is becoming obvious already that it will be impossible to set up any decent kind of trading corporation with this size of budget. All the minister is really doing is setting up a corporation that will be reaching into the department of international trade for personnel. It would make more sense, to repeat myself, to hire personnel directly under the auspices of the minister for international trade in the agriculture field and place them in those nations where we have the greatest potential for export markets. It would make a lot more sense to spend that money in that manner.

The article continues by stating that the minister's job will be:

—to shake up external affairs to ensure Canadian embassies and diplomatic personnel give top priority to seeking out possible new markets for Canadian goods in future. That's good news for Canadian farmers who are depending on new foreign markets to sell their agricultural produce.

It seems to me if that is the case perhaps we will have a conflict of interest here. The Minister of Agriculture wants his little trading group under his auspices and control. The minister for international trade will have a little group under his control. Perhaps he will lend a few people to the Minister of Agriculture. If we consider the Department of the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce, (Mr. Gray) we might find there are people in that area who are running around the world attempting to sell some of our products. Perhaps there is a need, as this gentleman mentions in his article, to put this all under one minister and give him a decent budget so he can get out and do the job, rather than creating a new Crown corporation which is to be controlled by different ministers.