

Canagrex

of Agriculture for the fact that the proposed agency was to be given only a fraction of the budget and manpower originally proposed by the Hon. Member for Elgin when he was Minister of Agriculture. It was not until the Hon. Member for Etobicoke Centre (Mr. Wilson), one of the Bay Street boys, decided that this was a threat to free enterprise. It was at that point, when some of the big corporations that feed the Conservative Party, like Canada Packers, Northern Sales and other such corporations, got into the act, that the Conservatives suddenly did a turnaround on this.

Some of the overkill on this legislation has really been something to behold. We heard just a few moments ago from the Hon. Member for Capilano (Mr. Huntington) who goes nuts over it. He has this fear that Canagrex will collectivize Canada's agriculture. He talks about a state monopoly for the import and export of agricultural products. This is absolutely looney, Mr. Speaker. I think probably the looniest statement that has come out in this debate came from the Hon. Member for Assiniboia (Mr. Gustafson) some time ago. I am not sure when it was, but he made this suggestion:

Say that the president of Socialist International put out a decree that all members, the Communist countries and the socialist countries, only buy state-to-state. Would not Canagrex become a level to automatically eliminate any private trading company within Canada? In my opinion Canagrex will give the socialists and Communist world a tremendous lever.

So said the Hon. Member for Assiniboia some time ago. As *The Globe and Mail* said at that time, that statement took the level of debate to a new low of comedy in this House.

An Hon. Member: Tory low.

Mr. Sargeant: I see, Mr. Speaker, that you are cutting me off. I think my comments should make it rather obvious that we are supportive of this piece of legislation and really do hope it works to the benefit of all Canadian farmers.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Corbin): Order, please. It would be wrong for the Hon. Member to suggest that the Speaker is cutting him off. I simply inform him that his time has expired. The Hon. Member for Burin-St. George's (Mr. Simmons).

[*Translation*]

Mr. Roger Simmons (Burin-St. George's): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to express my support for this Bill, because Canagrex is really the best thing that could happen to this country.

[*English*]

This Bill will facilitate the promotion—

[*Translation*]

This is just to show that some Newfies are able to communicate with Quebecers. When my good friend, the Member for St. John's West (Mr. Crosbie), becomes Leader, he will need someone who understands French and can translate from French into Newfie.

[*English*]

This Bill will facilitate the promotion and trade of agricultural produce.

Mr. Munro (Esquimalt-Saanich): And Liberals.

Mr. Simmons: There is no sinister plan here. I say this especially for the information of my good friend from Capilano and of my good friend from Lethbridge-Foothills. There is no sinister plan here. You can search for it all you want. If the hon. gentlemen opposite want to know how sinister this proposal is, I will give them a clue. There is already in existence a plan equally sinister, equally diabolical and equally all-embracing. It is known as the Canadian Wheat Board.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Mayer: How much wheat do you grow in Newfoundland?

Mr. Simmons: That is the sinister plan. I am seeing first-hand what can happen when there is no co-ordinating strategy to promote abroad the produce from a primary industry. I am thinking of the fishing industry and the chaos in which we find ourselves in Atlantic Canada, particularly in Newfoundland, because of the absence of any co-ordinated strategy.

I say to my good friend from Vancouver that I do not expect a private importer to be excited about public exports, but I ask him at least to listen to what is being said because he may learn something, the real reason why we are doing what we do. I say to him that there is a good parallel in the fishing industry where things would have been less miserable for the fishermen and the fish plant workers on the South Coast of Newfoundland, in parts of Nova Scotia, in parts of Quebec, if we had had the kind of co-operative marketing strategy being proposed under the Canagrex Bill. I cannot find anything especially diabolical or sinister about this Bill.

On the subject of the fishing industry, if I have one criticism with the Kirby Task Force Report that was presented some months ago, it is, it has been and will continue to be, that Doctor Kirby and his associates failed to bite the bullet on the important issue of export marketing. They failed to do what needs to be done in so far as the sale of fish products abroad is concerned.

The Hon. Member for Capilano (Mr. Huntington) attempts, as he so often does, to spread great fears about creeping socialism, to connote and represent the Canagrex Bill as another power grabbing effort. I ask him whether he has not looked at the very agency to which I made reference a moment ago, the Canadian Wheat Board. Why does the Hon. Member not tell us just how much power the major food retail chains have in this country? Is that what he wants to happen in this particular sector as well? There are five major retail chains controlling 70 per cent of retail food sales in the country. Is that private enterprise at its best?

• (1620)

Mr. Malone: So what?

Mr. Simmons: I hear the Hon. Member saying, "So what?". I am against it, that is what. Perhaps the Hon. Member for Capilano should tell us about the four large grain trading multinational companies—Cargill, Dryfus, Bunge and Continental.