

*Canagrex*

[Translation]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Corbin):** Order, please. The Hon. Parliamentary Secretary, on a point of order.

**Mr. Dionne (Chicoutimi):** Mr. Speaker, would my colleague opposite agree to being asked a question at this point?

● (1210)

[English]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Corbin):** A question could only be asked at this time with the Hon. Member's consent.

**Mr. Neil:** Mr. Speaker, if these were 20-minute speeches, I would be very happy to accept a question; but because of the limited time, I do not feel that I have time. I will answer his question personally afterwards, if he so desires, but I only have about one and one half minutes left. If I have any little bit of time left, I might entertain a question.

I might say in closing that the amendments with which we are dealing today are ones which will make the Bill palatable to the majority of agricultural groups and producers in Canada. As the Bill exists at the present time, without these amendments well over half of the witnesses who appeared before us opposed the Bill in its present form. The majority of people have no objection to giving Conagrex, IT&C or the Department of External Affairs the power to promote and facilitate the export of agricultural products. However, they are absolutely opposed to the powers which are in the Bill to take complete control of agriculture.

If there is any time left, Mr. Speaker, I would be happy to entertain a question from the Hon. Member.

[Translation]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Corbin):** Is the Hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Dionne) rising to ask a question?

**Mr. Dionne (Chicoutimi):** Yes, Mr. Speaker. I would like to know whether big corporations like CN, CP and the Canadian Wheat Board that were established by the Progressive Conservative Party—I would like to know whether my colleague opposite means that the Canadian Wheat Board, which has the power to purchase and sell agricultural products, should have those powers withdrawn.

[English]

**Mr. Neil:** I am not saying that at all, Mr. Speaker. The Wheat Board is dealing in a different type of commodity. The commodity with which it deals is traded on the world market.

**Mr. Smith:** What's the difference?

**Mr. Neil:** The production of wheat, oats and barley, with which the Wheat Board deals, is concentrated in the West, in the Wheat Board area, and there is no possibility of playing off the East against the West by the Wheat Board, as there is in the Bill.

[Translation]

**Mr. Dionne (Chicoutimi):** Mr. Speaker, I have another question for the Hon. Member.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Corbin):** Order, please. That is subject to the unanimous consent of the House.

[English]

Is there unanimous consent to allow the Hon. Member to ask another question?

**Some Hon. Members:** No.

[Translation]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Corbin):** There is no unanimous consent.

[English]

**Mr. Vic Althouse (Humboldt-Lake Centre):** Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak on the amendments to the Canagrex Bill, Bill C-85, amendments which have been proposed by the Progressive Conservative Party to take away the buy and sell provisions in the original legislation. I find that we in this corner of the House will not be able to support that sort of amendment.

This particular aspect of the Bill was discussed quite broadly in committee, but apparently not broadly enough for Hon. Members of the Official Opposition to comprehend what it takes to complete a sale. This seems a little hard to believe, considering that they claim to be members of a free enterprise Party and to have a full and complete understanding of the workings of the market. It is perhaps ironic that a democratic socialist like myself will have to explain to them how one goes about completing a sale, how one goes about making a market function and how one goes about making an agency like Canagrex one which will be of some use to the farmers of Canada.

There are a number of basic routes from production to the final market through which any commodity goes. Farmers know how to do the production. Usually they have no trouble arranging transportation. Usually we can do some of the processing in Canada which is required before the commodity is sold to the consumer who wants the final product, although there are sometimes difficulties involved in the storage and handling of some of the products which are perishable. However, it is the movement, the selling and the completing of the sale, the little details of ensuring and amassing enough product to attract the attention of foreign buyers, which is usually the aspect which farmers do not have the time, money or expertise to complete.

A number of the Provinces recognized that fact and set up agencies very similar to Canagrex in order to complete sales to foreign markets. In fact, seven of the ten provincial Governments in this country have set up agencies and marketing institutions similar to Canagrex. My own Province of Saskatchewan has had such an agency for about ten years. My neighbouring Province, Alberta, had one of the first, complete with all of the powers found in Canagrex, plus a few more.

**Mr. Whelan:** Shame.