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commercial attachés and embassies around the world can be given much credit because they have been doing a good job. In addition, the Department of Industry, Trade and Commerce has several programs, and I will outline a couple of them this evening. There is the Promotional Projects Program and its short title, or abbreviation, is the PPP. The department states that "the main objective of the Promotional Projects Program of the Department of Inquiry, Trade and Commerce is to promote the export of Canadian products and services". That would include Canadian agricultural products. The program consists of a number of sponsored promotions designed to meet particular requirements, and these include trade fairs abroad, trade commissions, in-store promotions, incoming trade delegations and buyer programs. That is precisely the kind of program from which agricultural exports can benefit.

I am told that these forms of assistance vary from project to project, where the government cost-shares travel arrangements for people who want to travel to potential markets and assess them on a first-hand basis. The Department of Industry, Trade and Commerce also assists people who are involved in actual sales ventures in other countries. Eligibility is such that the company involved must be established and operating in Canada and that the products which are being exported must be at least 60 per cent manufactured in Canada. Since agricultural products would be 100 per cent manufactured in Canada, those producers would have no problem meeting the criteria. In addition, the Export Development Corporation has a program providing export credit insurance. The purpose of this is to insure Canadian firms against non-payment when Canadian goods and services are sold abroad. Agricultural commodities qualify.

The Export Development Corporation also provides long term export loans. It provides sureties and related insurance for performance and foreign investment guarantees, insuring Canadians against loss of their investments abroad by reason of political actions. Those are some of the things which are presently being done by the government, and we must applaud it for that. Again, from what we have been told in committee, the people in the business of exporting agricultural commodities have made good use of that service, by and large. In addition, in March of this year, a news item in "Trade News", which was sent to my office, stated that the Department of Industry, Trade and Commerce had set up a new program under the EDC, specifically aimed at food, called PEMD Food, the Program for Export Market Development, specifically for food. This program was intended to cover the costs of people interested in developing export markets so that they could visit new markets, identify export potential and allow them to participate in trade fairs in order to bring potential foreign buyers to Canada and to allow for formal bidding on specific projects outside Canada. "Trade News" stated on page 3:

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Normally, approved costs will be shared on a 50/50 basis by the department. These costs include personnel costs, travel costs, special costs such as booth

space, rentals, consultant and professional fees. The contributions are generally repayable—

This is interesting.

—if the project is successful and results in new export sales. Repayment may be waived in cases where the applicant is not a sales organization and where sales are not generated as a direct result of the project.

The promotional and export guarantees and the market intelligence which is provided for in this bill is now being provided by the Department of Industry, Trade and Commerce generally under its mandate but, more specifically, under a new program which has just been established by that department called the "Program for Export Market Development (Food)". Those of us who have followed this bill through committee really question why the government needs to set up another Crown corporation to compete with existing government programs already in operation.

The mention of Crown corporations brings another point to mind. This government has a penchant for setting up Crown corporations, to the extent that I do not think anyone really knows how many Crown corporations are in existence. We question why we need another Crown corporation to get involved and to compete with government departments already in the field when there are so many other Crown corporations already in existence and when we are having problems in terms of exercising proper financial control over many of those Crown corporations.

There are some very serious questions to be asked about this bill and particularly about the provisions in the bill which allow the government to get involved directly or engage in buying and selling agricultural commodities.

Let me deal with what I think should be the main responsibility of the government in terms of maintaining agricultural exports. Surely the main objective and the main preoccupation of the government should be keeping agricultural production in this country competitive. I submit—and I think I would be backed up by literally every farmer in the country—that this government, and particularly this minister, have been absolute flops at keeping Canadian agricultural producers competitive with producers around the world.

Let me compare our situation with that of our main competitor south of the border. I challenge the minister to do so. I know he will speak after me and ramble and make a lot of noise but, as usual, probably without making a lot of sense. He should look at hard facts about American producers. If he did that, he would realize that American farmers have access to financing at rates of interest lower than those paid by Canadian farmers. Many of us in this House have raised the issue with the minister and with the Minister of Finance of how we could use some American programs as examples of how to bring about lower financing costs for Canadian farmers. I see the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance (Mr. Fisher) sitting beside the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Whelan). It is interesting that he is here tonight. I have had discussions with that gentleman about some of the programs the Americans have in place. Those programs allow American farmers to compete more favourably with us. I had discussions