

Canagrex

Committee on Standing Orders and Procedure ought to have done. Every report that goes to committee ought to cause that committee to meet, and if those provisions were there it would be a different matter, but committees do not necessarily meet.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I regret to interrupt the Hon. Member, but his time has expired.

Mr. Arnold Malone (Crowfoot): Mr. Speaker, this particular legislation has very obviously caused a degree of anger in the House of Commons which, while it surfaces on other Bills and issues, is not necessarily typical of all legislation. I submit to you, Sir, that imbedded in the antics which have taken place in this debate to date is the fact that there is something fundamentally wrong with this Bill which has divided this country East from West, in which there is a difference in ideology, and that the Government is not paying attention to what that difference is. It is not making any attempt to rectify fundamental concerns of the people of one region of this country.

I submit to you, Sir, that the underlying motivation for this Bill is a drunken thirst for power. This is an attempt to gain control of a major industry, namely that of agriculture. The Minister of Veterans Affairs (Mr. Campbell) mentioned that Prince Edward Island was the only Province whose primary industry was agriculture. I submit that almost all the Provinces have agriculture as their major or second major source of income. But that is beside the point. The point is: why are we opposed to this Bill?

Let me state to begin with that this Bill is not all bad. Few pieces of legislation ever are. It is not totally negative, but whatever good is imbedded within it is outweighed by Clause 14 which outlines the powers of Canagrex. It is excessive in the extreme. It is excessive to the extent it drives fear into one region of the country. That one clause describing the powers of the corporation takes up almost four pages of the Bill. Included in those powers, Mr. Speaker, are the following:

(a) purchase agricultural products and food products and package, process, store, ship, insure, import, export or sell or otherwise dispose—

That means, Mr. Speaker, that the Government now has everything it wants within the domain of agriculture. What we have left is free enterprise on agricultural labour, and state ownership of agricultural management.

It is not that the Bill is totally wrong. There are people who produce products such as white beans or sunflower products, commodities with relatively smaller production, who could benefit from a marketing agency, although I submit that one already exists within the domain of Industry, Trade and Commerce. But there are two things wrong with this Bill. The first is that it forms another Crown corporation. While I do not like that, I can swallow sideways and let it go down in a lump and then go home and explain it away to my constituents. But I can never sell to the people of western Canada the concept of a Bill which gives the Government of Canada the powers I have referred to in Clause 14. It means, Mr. Speaker, that I could go into the supermarket and, instead of finding the

traditional labels on our food, I would see the label: "Canagrex, it's ours". This is because the legislation itself includes the words, "the right to package". In the debate today, a number of Hon. Members have said, "Oh, listen, that is simply not the case. That is not at all what the Government is requesting. The Government has no intention of doing that. That is nonsense". That was precisely the same position that they took with regard to the questions involving Petro-Canada. When I find my notes in a moment, I will put on the record that little bit with regard to Petro-Canada. We will come to that in a few moments.

● (1710)

Mr. Blaikie: You've only got a few.

Mr. Malone: I have found it right here at the bottom of my pile. Mr. Speaker, I know there is some question by the Chair as to whether or not we can make the analogy on Petro-Canada. I want to make it because I want to make it on the point that there is reason for concern. I want to quote what Donald Macdonald said back in 1973. He said that Petro-Canada would be about the country, soothing the fears of corporate Canada, that it would likely be nothing more than a small player in the domestic oil patch so that the federal Government could learn how the energy sector worked. He said it would be a window on the industry. What happened in 1974 was that it began the federal Government's existing, petroleum interests with \$383 million. In 1977, Ottawa added to that, infusing another \$155 million. It is still a relatively small corporation. By 1978, the pace had quickened. The corporation bought out Pacific Petroleum for \$1.5 billion, with further federal corporation contributions of another \$240 million in equity. It finished the year with a B.C. oil refinery, interest in coal, uranium and various other minerals, minority shares in two pipelines and 426 gasoline stations. Then, to bring us a little closer to the present, in 1981 the company bought Petrofina for \$1.5 billion, financed in part by a 4 cents a gallon tax on all persons using gasoline, and including home heating fuel. At year's end, with reference to the corporation which was only to be a window on the industry to allow the Government to see how the private sector works, that being the corporate objective, it is into the private sector with total assets of \$6.6 billion, 169 million gross acres, 5,800 employees and 1,500 gas stations. That is its window on the industry. Here we have Canagrex.

The Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Whelan) should be protecting the individual pride of that one bastion of free enterprising people left in the country, the farm people of Canada who believe in pride, not only of their ownership, but also of their self management. He says that the Government of Canada, with these powers, can purchase agricultural and food products and may package, put the little labels on the can, and process, store, ship and insure them. That is what the Minister of Agriculture is doing. No one in the House, from any of the three Parties, is denying that we need to have a stronger effort in international marketing. I believe that to be the position of all three political Parties. However, to presume that the