

Canagrex

Idaho, and in Bangor, Maine, about the potato programs that we have that are too good.

You know, Mr. Speaker—well I will not ask you to make comments, because I know you cannot in your present position, but I know you could, and I know you would if you could, I should say.

I will speak on the last point first. It is on Motion No. 14. A sunset clause is what they call it. In effect it presumes that Canagrex is guilty unless proven innocent and puts the corporation to death at the end of five years unless it is rescued through extraordinary measures. I understand that the intent of the sunset clause is to ensure that the government carries no deadwood, that it only maintains agencies that are proven effective. I believe we have answered that concern through the amendment that we put forth in Clause 41. In that clause we agreed that after five years Canagrex's operation should be brought before the Standing Committee on Agriculture for report and full review. This is a much more meaningful process than the sunset clause. It will provide for an effective scrutiny of the agency, but it also presumes that Canagrex as a business will continue to function.

Tell me, Mr. Speaker, how could we attract top people to the agency if they had to assume that that agency would not be around after 1987? How could we get some highly skilled persons to move, say, from Alberta, a province that has been very successful at exporting and whose organization has the power to buy and sell? They said they were not successful until they were granted in Alberta the power to buy and sell?

While I am talking about Alberta, maybe we should put on the record how many Crown corporations they have in Alberta. They have 18. Many of them have the power to buy and sell. They even have an airline, they have a trust company, they have many Crown corporations.

Mr. Mayer: Would the minister accept a very brief short question?

Mr. Whelan: When I am finished, with pleasure.

• (2130)

I just finished mentioning all the successful Crown corporations which the province of Alberta has. There is the Alberta treasury branches, and I could give you a whole list. I am amazed at the number there are in Alberta. As well, look at the amount of land Alberta has leased to farmers—state-owned land that is farmed. There are millions of acres under that kind of program. No one says that Alberta is grabbing all the land. No one says anything like that. For instance, that was not said when I met the new premier of agriculture in Saskatchewan. How many Crown corporations do they have in Saskatchewan? They have 24. I asked the minister if he was going to get rid of those Crown corporations that he has the power to buy and sell. He laughed. He said, "Not if they are making money. Not if they are being run well." I will bet you that they will not get rid of one, because if you look at the records, those corporations are all doing pretty well. I can go as far east as we can go, to Newfoundland. How many Crown

corporations do they have in Newfoundland? They have 37. The minister of agriculture for Newfoundland told me in Halifax that his government is creating three new ones to assist the agriculture industry in Newfoundland. They have the power to buy and sell. He said, "I do not see very much wrong with what you are doing. I do not really see anything wrong."

When the members from Alberta in particular really study their Crown corporations, they will see that they have imagined that I am creating something that is different from what is there. Your own livestock people have admitted that they could not be successful until they have the power to buy and sell. When they appeared before the committee they admitted the difficulties they had with the present federal program to assist them in exporting live cattle to Mexico. They could not do it. I even became involved in the issue with IT & C as a minister trying to assist them. We could not assist them, but we will under Canagrex.

I will not list all the Crown corporations, but a quick review of the list shows that the provinces have over 200. It is true that we have Crown corporations in the federal system, but certainly there are Crown corporations as well in the provincial system. I just have to mention Ontario Hydro, for instance, which is a monster which has the power to expropriate, buy and sell and do everything else.

Agricultural development is a long-term process. It is not the kind of thing that lends itself to the quick and dirty kind of atmosphere that the sunset clause would create within the Canagrex office. That clause means you could walk in and kill them at the end of five years, no matter how successful they are. However, if the committee finds that Canagrex is ineffective when a five-year review is conducted, the committee could recommend its demise.

The next amendment I would like to discuss is motion No. 2 which would delete beef cattle and the beef products from Canagrex's possible realm of operation.

Mr. McKnight: I rise on a point of order, Mr. Speaker, I hesitate to interrupt the hon. minister but I believe he is addressing an amendment that has been ruled out of order by the Chair.

Mr. Whelan: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Medicine Hat (Mr. Hargrave) said that he would bring it up later. The hon. member who led off the discussion spoke about everything. There is nothing in the bill about gasoline, taxes or anything else. He was involved in everything. He talked about just everything I ever did or said. I had my hearing aid turned off but I even heard some of what he said. I was told that I did not miss much either.

I would like to quote from a letter which I received from the Canadian Hereford Association in January. It says:

We look forward to utilizing the services of Canagrex to help us expand our international markets.

I have also heard from many other smaller organizations and firms in the beef business who have expressed their