

marketing system in a good many cases is controlled. It is very rigid, and too often it does not allow new young farmers with new ideas into the business.

● (2150)

In terms of Canadian agriculture as far as the world is concerned, the main product we export at the present time is grain. We are a net importer of many agricultural commodities. Certainly this demonstrates the difficulty with which agriculture is faced. If it were not for grain and oilseed products, the country would be a net importer of most agricultural products and, in effect, we would end up with a deficit. The danger is that Canadian agriculture will lose its competitive advantage in world markets.

The problem lies in many, many areas, but part of the problem lies with the government and with the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Whelan) who has been the minister for a long time. There is no imagination in terms of attracting new people to the agricultural industry, of devising a food strategy or of providing direction for agriculture. At the present time the only display of imagination is the Minister of Agriculture trotting around the country, attempting to obtain support for a beef marketing board which the majority of Canadian producers do not want. It is the kind of wasted energy we see, wasted energy looking inward at how to solve our problem or how to quarter up the market within the country, without paying any attention to servicing a large export market. It boils down to lost opportunities for Canadian farmers and for the tremendous number of people who service agriculture. Service is by far the largest component of any economy, that is the service sector surrounding agriculture and the food industry. It boils down to lost opportunities for all these particular areas.

We are not aggressive enough. Any of us who have had the opportunity or the privilege of travelling outside the country and talking to people in other lands have heard that Canadians are not aggressive enough. Most often we take a back seat to the United States. There should be no reason for this. Part of the leadership falls on the shoulders of the Minister of Agriculture, and that leadership is not forthcoming.

We should be looking at a new dynamic vision of agriculture in the west, and we are not doing it. There is absolutely no question in most people's minds that the decade of the seventies was the decade of oil. The decade of the eighties, and probably the decade of the nineties, will be decades of agriculture, food and water, but we are not addressing the problems at the present time. Infrastructure must be in place, but it is not in place at the present time to provide a springboard from which to set the direction and the parameters for what must be a new and dynamic direction as far as agriculture is concerned, especially in western Canada.

I say this because I know western Canadian agriculture, but there should be an infrastructure in place for agriculture in the maritimes, Quebec and Ontario. We must be more forward-looking, but obviously we are not. Because of this, we will suffer as a country. We must ensure the movement of agricul-

tural products for the decade of the eighties and into the decade of the nineties. This is something we are not addressing as an industry. Some commodity groups are attempting to address it but the industry is not, primarily because there is no agricultural strategy which allows such an input and provides a structure for that type of direction.

If we are to have dynamic agriculture over the next number of years, there must be less government involvement. The private sector is really the engine which fuels this great industry. It must be allowed the freedom to operate, but that is not the case at the present time. There must be aggressive marketing by private agricultural firms in Canada. This is not happening at the present time because the federal government seems intent on imposing itself in too many areas of the agricultural sector. The private sector must be the main engine or the main driving force behind a new dynamic agriculture.

The amendments concerning the Farm Credit Corporation which we have been debating are strictly band-aid measures. They are really meant to cover up a very serious problem which we are not addressing, the problem of farm income. Rather than addressing it, we are putting band-aids on the particular problem. Until a clear direction is established, we cannot become what we must be, that is, a great agricultural exporting nation which can provide for its farmers and can provide desperately-needed outside money for its gross national product as well as a healthy sector for secondary manufacturing and agriculture. Until we do this, we will not realize the potential of our country.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Blaker):** Is the House ready for the question?

**Some hon. Members:** Question.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Blaker):** Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the said motion?

**Some hon. Members:** Agreed.

Motion agreed to, bill read the second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Agriculture.

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## PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

[English]

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 40 deemed to have been moved.