

Time Allocation

critic of the Opposition Party had agreed that all the amendments that were necessary had been introduced and that the buy-and-sell provision was correct as it stood. Let me quote from the proceedings of the agriculture Committee on June 29, 1982 when our agricultural critic stated as follows:

However, we are adamantly opposed to the buy-and-sell provisions of the legislation contained in Bill C-85. These powers are too broad and too ill defined. They could be used to supersede or usurp the powers of our agricultural marketing boards.

He went on to say unequivocally that we do not support the breadth of this Act as it applies to marketing.

I was interested to listen to the remarks of the Member who spoke for the NDP. While supporting all those instruments which would put us in a totally regulated society, I suppose he or one of his colleagues will speak in this House in support of Lech Walesa who is suffering a total loss of personal freedom by virtue of Government control.

This Bill represents incorrigible Government control of agriculture.

Mr. Blaikie: Why don't you tell the truth for a change?

Mr. McCain: When this Bill was introduced, no one was in any hurry. It was introduced on December 8, 1981 but did not come before the House until January 25, 1982 and second reading was completed by February 5. The meetings to which Members of the Government have referred were held and were necessary because of the outpouring of objection to the legislative fashion in which proper principles were being put in place.

The Federation of Agriculture supported the Bill but it qualified its support and no attention was paid to that qualification. The Horticultural Council supported it and I challenge Hon. Members to read its report and the qualification that is mentioned. The amendments it proposed are not reflected in the Bill. The Bill was dreamed up and presented as if it were the wish of agriculture as a whole in Canada when in fact it is not.

The last Member who spoke for the Government mentioned the potato industry. It has terrible troubles, Mr. Speaker. Perhaps this is only a symptom of the troubles it would have if the Government were to manage its affairs, as it could under this Bill.

All the time that was spent considering the Bill in Committee was necessary because of the outpouring of agricultural opinion from organizations all across the country. All of them asked for qualifications and amendments to the Bill, which are not now included.

When the Bill was introduced we agreed to it on division. It contained three principles at that time. First, that there should be export credit for agricultural exports; second, that there should be better consular representation in the foreign markets to stimulate better sales; and third, that the Government of Canada should, through the Department of Agriculture, have the authority to intercede and become the agent of Canadian business in the foreign market, where necessary.

We support these three principles and have supported them from the first. Our position of support for the Bill should not

be confused with the stipulations our critic made about how it could be made to work better.

We never agreed that there should be joint ventures. This would permit the Government to put up 99.99 per cent of all the money required to establish a processing plant, to buy land, to grow or rear agricultural products, or to participate in the production, processing and marketing of products. That capability is in the Bill at present and we object to it.

We agreed that there should be an agency but we never agreed to a Crown corporation with broad powers. The fact that it will be audited, as the NDP has boasted, is not particularly relevant. An audit is not conducted until after the fact; it is the management before the audit takes place that is important. If it is to be managed as the CDC has been managed, then we do not want any part of it under this or any other Minister.

The CDC was the subject of comment in the Auditor General's report in 1976. It was also the subject of an extensive report of the Public Accounts Committee which made recommendations. None of these was fully implemented under the direction of the Minister. In 1981 the Auditor General found exactly the same faults with CDC as he had found in 1976.

In the Public Accounts Committee we have found that we cannot get information from the Minister that would enable us to issue a report this year. More than six years have passed since the CDC came under criticism by the Auditor General. What possible use are his reports to the farmers of the country if there is a six-year delay in the implementation of his recommendations? I support the amendment, Mr. Speaker. However, it is ridiculous to think that it will give Canagrex the management which Agriculture Canada deserves, desires and needs.

● (1610)

The Minister of Agriculture misled this House in his statement with respect to what our critic has said. I prove that by a quotation. If the Minister respects the Mother of Parliament, upon his return to this House he will apologize and retract an unmitigated error in his statement to this House. The Minister has tried to mislead this House, which knows better; but if he is quoted abroad or if he makes that statement on the hustings, he certainly does not respect the Mother of Parliament, any other Parliament, or the methods under which Parliament conducts itself.

There is a second misleading statement. Farmers think, as the Hon. Member from Quebec just said, that this is the end of their difficulties. Do not forget that this Bill stipulates that Canagrex must not and cannot lose money. Let me repeat that: Canagrex must not and cannot lose money. Canagrex has a budget of some uncertain terms, but somewhere between \$5 million and \$10 million, and it is to engage in all the business of the world on that budget. It can scarcely manage its own affairs, let alone salvage the farmers in this situation. And Canagrex cannot lose money?