

Canagrex Act

farmers would rather specialize in the production of grain and rapeseed while farmers in Quebec and Ontario would tend to specialize in the production of pork which places them in a better position to serve regularly and consistently the export markets.

This does not mean there are no pork producers in western Canada. Far from it. However, the smaller number of pigs in Alberta has absolutely nothing to do with the decline of our exports to Japan, as implied by the hon. member for Carleton-Charlotte. It must be emphasized the U.S. are currently our main pork market, with sales of 145 million pounds in 1981. It must be noted that over the same period Canada imported 35 million pounds of pork from the United States. Also, the hon. member opposite suggested that since we import cattle in eastern Canada, we cannot export cattle or beef to the United States. Coming as he does from the maritime provinces the hon. member for Carleton-Charlotte, who is fully aware of our potato markets in the United States, where we normally export from the maritime provinces while we import in the western provinces and central Canada, should know that the food market is not homogeneous.

As for livestock in 1981, we imported 170,000 head of cattle for beef and veal, especially to Ontario. At the same time, we exported 200,000 heads of cattle for beef, and feeding calves to the United States. Most of the cattle exported for veal and feeding calves came from western Canada, but it should be stated that eastern Canada exported 85,000 head of cattle for beef and veal, especially dairy herds. At the same time in 1981, we were exporting 121 million pounds of beef to the United States while we were importing about 20 million pounds from that same country. Almost all the beef exported from western Canada comes from beef cattle and dairy herds in eastern Canada and is used for processed meat such as sausages and hamburgers.

I think, Mr. Speaker, that since those statements were in my opinion unfounded, it was necessary to get the facts straight, and it is my belief that Canagrex will contribute to strengthening the foundations of Canadian agriculture.

I also noted other hon. members have stated that there was a tendency to socialize our Canadian agriculture. I dispute the validity of that claim, Mr. Speaker. Canadian farmers are entirely free to produce what they want on their farms except that when it comes to marketing, they have to obey the rules which are increasingly made on their own suggestions. I contend that the Government of Canada does not impose its decisions on farmers; on the contrary, over the past few years the government has been really open to discussions or to suggestions put forward by the farming community, which is primarily responsible for agricultural production and fair prices. I am proud to repeat, Mr. Speaker, that compared with the United States, which is the only country in the world to grow food throughout the year on account of its climate, Canadian producers can provide the same foodstuff at a cost

only 1 per cent higher. This is all to the credit of Canadians. We are told that Canadian agriculture should be socialized, and in response to that I would like to quote from this book Mr. Speaker.

● (1530)

[English]

In his book "The Merchants of Grain", Dan Morgan describes the structure and marketing methods of the five multinational grain companies which control the world grain market. Does the hon. member for Carleton-Charlotte suggest that we leave ourselves to the mercy of these huge companies when Mr. Morgan describes the Canadian Wheat Board as the most sophisticated marketing system in the world, and leave ourselves at the mercy of five huge companies, not one of them Canadian?

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker, if we were to believe some of the untruths which are being spread everywhere in Canada, we would think the government is trying to socialize agriculture. Because I was personally involved in agriculture for a while, I can honestly say that farmers certainly enjoy more freedom than most Canadians. Except that sometimes they have marketing problems. That is why we are establishing a corporation called Canagrex to promote and facilitate the export to foreign markets of our agricultural and food products, and encourage our farmers to become more productive and dynamic, which in turn will result in lower production costs. People often say that there is no way we could get a hold on European markets. I do not share this view, Mr. Speaker. For instance, I read here that a dozen eggs cost \$2.65 in Paris, while it costs only \$1.18 in Quebec and the rest of Canada.

Mr. Laniel: They must have been laid by expensive chicks, that's why!

Mr. Dionne (Chicoutimi): My colleague is right when he says that they must have been laid by expensive chicks, because these prices are unacceptably high, and we could certainly use a corporation like Canagrex to sell more on foreign markets and encourage our farmers to become more productive and seek increased quotas. I shall mention other cases. For instance, beef is 35 per cent more expensive in Paris; chicken, 52 per cent; butter, 76 per cent, compared with 125 per cent for eggs. The situation in France is no exception. It is the same the world over, as I mentioned a moment ago. Only in the United States are production costs slightly lower than in Canada. Let me quote the price of eggs elsewhere in a few other countries. In Tokyo, a dozen eggs costs \$1.76, in Brussels, \$1.82, in London, \$2.31 and in Berne \$2.60. Mr. Speaker, I am anxious for that corporation to be set up and I look forward to the day when once and for all we decide to tackle world markets just like the Americans. We have much to learn from them. Day after day, their expert salesmen travel around the world selling their agricultural products. In Canada, in the