

Canagrex

Mr. Hopkins: I have a second question, Madam Speaker. When the announcement was first made of the dissolving of Canagrex, the Government announced that resources would be made available to the Department of External Affairs to continue the work of Canagrex. However, it would appear that this has not been the case. An examination of the Estimates for 1985-86 reveals no commitment in this regard whatsoever. The Hon. Member for Crowfoot made a great uproar about the \$6 million initial cost for Canagrex. In my view, \$6 million is nothing but petty cash to the present Prime Minister of Canada (Mr. Mulroney). I cannot see why the Hon. Member would complain so much about that.

● (1750)

Is the Hon. Member aware of additional funds which have been made available to promote the sale of agricultural products from Canada to other countries, particularly Third World countries?

Mr. Langdon: Madam Speaker, it is the case that in ministry after ministry cut-backs have occurred as opposed to expansions. This is true whether we talk about agriculture, external affairs or trade. It is simply not possible to see the expansion that the Hon. Member for Crowfoot (Mr. Malone) suggests took place. I think the Hon. Member's speech contained even more than the usual confusion which we so often hear from Conservative Members.

Mr. Len Hopkins (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke): Madam Speaker, I too would like to congratulate you on taking the chair. I wish you every success in your new role. We in the House will try to do our best to make your life reasonably happy.

The debate today has been a very interesting one in that it has brought out the philosophy, particularly that of government Members, that anything sponsored by Government in the way of sales will never work. With respect to Canagrex as an instrument of sales it is interesting to note that its board of directors consisted in the majority of people from the private sector. That is almost tantamount to saying that once people from the private sector move into government they lose all their previous principles. I do not buy that. It is important to have people from the private sector in sales positions in government. It is important to have a good mix which will provide an ongoing experience to offer to them. In turn, those who are used to the business world will be very much aware of how to deal with the business community. I think this was an excellent arrangement for the management of Canagrex.

We heard from Members opposite about the tremendous job the Government has done in the field of agriculture. Some 317 points were mentioned but not listed. They sounded something like the 338 promises that we heard about a little over two years ago.

I would like to refer for a moment to the 1984 election campaign. In particular I would like to refer to the Tory candidate against whom I ran. In fact, some people say that I

ran against two Tory candidates. One was the actual Tory candidate and the other was his twin brother, the Mayor of Brampton. It was not unusual for the Mayor of Brampton to visit my constituency for several days. It was difficult to tell one brother from the other. It was very handy to have the two of them roaming around the riding at once. So I feel I can say that I defeated two Tory candidates in the last election campaign, one being the Mayor of Brampton and the other the Tory candidate for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke. It is tough out there, Madam Speaker.

During the same election campaign, in a debate sponsored by the Federation of Agriculture, my opponent stated that if the people would only give the Conservatives two years they would solve the agricultural problems in Canada. Those two years are long gone, and what are the Conservatives doing today? They are paying farmers to get off the farms. They are trying to pay them in order to rid them of their problems. They are really in there pitching for these people. It seems to be the only policy they can find. They cannot find policies to keep farmers on the land so they pay them to get off the land.

Canagrex was never given a fair chance to prove itself. No one in the House can say with any validity that Canagrex could not have been just as successful in foreign markets as the Canadian Dairy Commission and the Canadian Wheat Board have been in operating under their mandates. Are government Members saying that because the Canadian Wheat Board is public sector it cannot perform a job? It has been performing a job. It is part of the public sector. The Canadian Dairy Commission has been performing an excellent job, and it is part of the public sector. To say that Canagrex would never work is not giving it a fair chance or a fair hearing. It just cannot be accepted as the truth.

It has been said that nothing in the public sector will work. Members opposite will ensure that it does not work. We have in place a Government which has slashed the budget of the National Research Council in half while at the same time saying that jobs are not being destroyed. Members opposite say that jobs are not being destroyed but, rather, that they are being transferred somewhere else. In terms of research the job is ongoing. One does not come along one day, disrupt the jobs, send the workers off in different directions and then believe that the same production will be achieved with ongoing programs.

I read an editorial on the weekend which stated that the NRC could drop its number of employees from 3,000 to 1,500 by the year 1988. That is disastrous. It is suggested that the same type of situation could occur with Atomic Energy of Canada. And Members opposite would have us destroy Canagrex today. They tried it in the last Parliament and it did not work.

When the Bill was before the House in 1982, approximately 26 per cent of our world market was in Third World countries. What is needed in Third World countries if one is to sell agricultural products there? Dock equipment, storage equipment and transportation equipment are necessary to move