

Canagrex

to a state corporation as contemplated by Canagrex? Could the Hon. Member not see that the private community that has marketed our products so well for over 100 years of Confederation could continue to sell Canadian goods where Canadian goods can be sold and could do so at a much lesser cost than the cost of a great big bureaucracy?

Mr. Caccia: Madam Speaker, I would be glad to attempt to answer that question because it points out the real intellectual problem the Hon. Member has. He feels that if something has worked well for the last 100 years, it will serve us for the next 100 years. That is where we part company.

Evidently, the Liberal Government of the day, through Eugene Whelan, felt that the time had arrived to adopt new techniques and new ways of competing with the reality of international markets. If the Hon. Member were to carry his logic to its ultimate conclusion, he would try to sell the Toronto Transit Commission to the private sector. I invite him to try to find someone who will provide that service as effectively, safely and well as a publicly owned agency does.

We know that the Hon. Member is biased against the presence of the state in the market-place. There is nothing wrong with the presence of the state in the market-place. We have had a mixed economy for decades. If we had not had a mixed economy, we would not have Air Canada and Canadian Pacific. We would not have the CBC and CTV.

Mr. Malone: What's that got to do with it?

Mr. Caccia: A broader principle is under discussion. If the Government of the day decided to create Canagrex, it was because it felt that it would be desirable and in the interest of promoting agricultural products in competition with other nations to have such an agency. That was the Liberal position which I outlined.

Mr. Whelan went one step beyond that and said that he wanted to have on the board of directors of Canagrex people from the private sector. I suppose this would please the Hon. Member because it would mean that there would be a mix. A publicly oriented institution would be run by private citizens. That was not such a bad idea.

Mr. Althouse: Madam Speaker, in light of the question that was just asked about the ability of the Canadian Commercial Corporation to make sales, I wonder if the Hon. Member would care to comment further. The member of the Opposition pointed out that the Canadian Commercial Corporation is able to make the sales, and I do not argue with that. I wonder, however, if the Hon. Member would care to comment on what agency or group is now available after the demise of Canagrex to gather the products from the various provinces and farmers and put them in position so the corporation could make sales. Is that not the vacuum that Canagrex was designed to fill?

Mr. Blenkarn: No, no, no.

Mr. Althouse: It is indeed. The Hon. Member for Mississauga South (Mr. Blenkarn) says that it was not. However, I read the objectives of Canagrex and they in fact included the ability to gather together products from within the country and to act with co-operatives, individuals, marketing boards and other corporations to gather products together so they will be in a position to be exported. Right now, we lack that kind of an agency. The Canadian Commercial Corporation can indeed make a sale on those very small products that are only grown in small amounts hither and yon across the country, but only if someone gathers them together so that the corporation may do so. Without Canagrex, there is no agency to do that.

Mr. Caccia: Madam Speaker, as usual, the Hon. Member for Humboldt—Lake Centre (Mr. Althouse) makes much more sense to me than the Hon. Member for Mississauga South (Mr. Blenkarn).

Mr. Clark (Brandon—Souris): Madam Speaker, if indeed Canagrex were of great importance to the agricultural community, then I would assume that western Canadian agricultural and farm organizations would be supporting the Liberal Party in its attempt to prevent the abolition of it. Therefore, can the Hon. Member for Davenport (Mr. Caccia) indicate to the House which western Canadian farm organizations other than the National Farmers Union are today opposing the abolition of Canagrex?

Mr. Caccia: Madam Speaker, at the time of the announcement of the measure, a number of agricultural organizations came out in support of Canagrex.

Mr. Blenkarn: No, today.

Mr. Caccia: It is important to know that that support was there at the time the measure was announced. I would imagine that those organizations had good reasons to support Canagrex. There were a number of those organizations and I would gladly list them for the Hon. Member if I only had the time to find the list among the papers on my desk.

Across the country, support for Canagrex was there. There was support for it in the House of Commons. Canagrex generated very good sales in its first year. If some of those organizations have changed their minds, perhaps the Hon. Member will have the opportunity to make that point in his speech and to explain to us why they changed their views. However, I can assure the Hon. Member that at that time, support for Canagrex was very strong and came from many organizations.

Mr. Arnold Malone (Crowfoot): Madam Speaker, I listened to a lot of diatribe from the Hon. Member for Davenport (Mr. Caccia) and I must say that those were most interesting comments coming from an Hon. Member who does not know a Hereford from a heifer. When it comes down to the whole question of whether or not Canagrex was an accepted organization, I can tell the Hon. Member that those Members of Parliament from the regions of Canada who will go home to