

*Canagrex*

and I invite all our listeners who wants a copy to write to me. No postage is necessary. But there was no mention, in these 338 promises that the Progressive Conservative Party would axe Canagrex. Nothing was said about it during the election campaign.

I am asking the Right Hon. Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Clark): Why do the Conservatives seek to abolish Canagrex when they did not even talk about it during the last electoral campaign. Why do away with Canagrex? That is what I am asking all Conservative Members in this House. If I am not given an answer, Mr. Speaker, it is because there is none, it is totally unreasonable. The truth is, Conservatives have this rightist bias and they do not want to see a Crown corporation whose role would be to market agricultural commodities. It is a kind of interference with their very, very, very conservative principles.

● (1540)

[English]

Do not think for one minute, Mr. Speaker, that I am the only one who does not want to abolish the Canagrex Corporation, or that I would be so partisan as to merely disagree with the Conservatives opposite on no other principle than the fact that I want to disagree with them. But I know you do not think that, Mr. Speaker, because you are far too reasonable.

**Mr. Epp (Provencher):** I do.

**Mr. Boudria:** I have in my hand a brief presented by the Ontario Federation of Agriculture. I invite the Minister to listen to what it says, and I will read it slowly so he will understand it all. The brief is dated October, 1986, and is entitled *Ontario Federation of Agriculture Brief to Cabinet*. I am sure the Minister must have read this brief, should have read it, or at least he should have had someone read it to him. The brief recommends under "Marketing" that the Government, commodity groups and farm organizations intensify their efforts to improve commodity marketing.

The Ontario Federation of Agriculture wants us to increase our efforts in marketing, but what is the Tory Government doing? It is abolishing the very organization that was created to improve marketing on an international level. The Government has almost a fetish about abolishing this Crown corporation. I ask why? We know that Canagrex was created by Bill C-85, which was presented some years ago. I say to the Conservatives opposite that the Hon. Member for Elgin (Mr. Wise), as Tory opposition critic in those days—as he will be again—said right in this House that he favoured Bill C-85, a Bill to establish the Canagrex Corporation to market on behalf of the people of Canada, and on behalf of the Government, agricultural commodities on an international basis.

What has happened to change the minds of all these Tories? What has happened to change the mind of the Minister of Agriculture and, more particularly, what has happened to the Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson) who introduced this measure not as an agricultural initiative—obviously he could

not because it had no agricultural merit—but as a budgetary initiative, cutting off agriculture as a deficit-cutting measure? Can you imagine that being done, Mr. Speaker, by a Party which made all kinds of promises to the farmers of Canada?

I have a series of newspaper clippings and I would like to read some of them because they are very important. The first article is entitled "Canagrex axing criticized by Epp".

**Mr. Nystrom:** By whom?

**Mr. Boudria:** It says "by Epp". I quote:

The Chairman of the Ontario Soy-Bean Growers Marketing Board has criticized the federal Government for its disbanding of Canagrex, the Crown corporation created by the previous Liberal Government—

Peter Epp, speaking at an information meeting for Area B in eastern Ontario recently—

**Mr. Nystrom:** Oh, Peter Epp.

**Mr. Boudria:** Mr. Epp said this and it is important.

—said Canagrex had started to make inroads in the marketing of soy beans abroad, particularly in Egypt.

Mr. Epp very clearly said that he was against the dissolution of Canagrex. I ask Conservative Members opposite, particularly the Minister for National Health and Welfare (Mr. Epp), how they could possibly not realize and take notice of what Mr. Epp was saying to them? I have some difficulty in understanding that, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to read another article written by Barry Wilson, a well known and respected western reporter. He said on February 28:

A quiet tug of war has developed within the federal Government over which department will fill the food export gap created by the dismantling of Canagrex.

Agriculture Minister John Wise says the Crown corporation will be replaced by expanding the market development directorate of Agriculture Canada.

The department has asked for expanded budget and hiring authority for the unit.

Meanwhile, officials in the trade section of the external affairs department are arguing that the promotion of food trade should fall within their jurisdiction.

That is typically Tory, is it not, Mr. Speaker? I hear the Hon. Member opposite saying, of course it is typically Tory, no one seems to know what they are doing. We have two arms of the Government both claiming that they would be responsible for the export marketing of agricultural commodities. Of course, we know that what we do not need are those two other organizations pretending to do the job of Canagrex. What we need is Canagrex back in order to do the job it set out to do.

I say to Hon. Members opposite that the United States Government passed in December of 1985 the United States Food Security Act. It is affectionately known to us as the U.S. Farm Bill. Because of that piece of legislation, the most offensive piece of legislation ever passed against Canadian farmers, if there ever was a time we needed Canagrex, it is now. Even if we had not needed Canagrex the day the Minister of Finance made that erroneous statement on Black Thursday, November 8, 1984, in the House of Commons—and we did