

*Canagrex Dissolution Act*

viable operation if they must wait for an exporter to purchase their products.

Less than 4 per cent of over-all agricultural production consists of products that are not produced on a large-scale basis. This includes virtually hundreds of products. These farmers have no way of amassing their production to make it look attractive to foreign buyers. When the producers of these commodities are scattered throughout the country, the problems of putting that production together become almost insurmountable because these products are a provincial responsibility according to our Constitution. When the production in a particular province is not sufficient to warrant action by the provincial Government to seek markets for that commodity, the alternative for farmers is to combine interprovincially. However, this is not possible under the current law in this country.

The Progressive Conservative Government failed to allow that to happen when it opened up the Farm Products Marketing Agencies Act to include the word "tobacco". I had moved a motion that was duly seconded and recorded in the House to permit the Act to be opened up so that producers of red meats, fruits, vegetables and grains could have equal access to that right to organize themselves interprovincially in order to market their products outside the country.

The Government, which is supposed to support the farmers, refuses to allow such authority to be included in the Act. The farmers have had to organize in such a way that a majority of their producers were in favour of such a step before applying for that right. The Government still refused to grant them that right.

The Minister of Agriculture, in presenting his motion to dissolve Canagrex, pointed out that he has been very active and had introduced a great deal of agricultural legislation. He spoke about the hundreds of things that he has claimed to have done since becoming Minister. Subsequently I got a list of what the Minister has claimed to have done as Minister of Agriculture and I began to do some analysis. This Minister of Agriculture has done very little. Most of the one hundred and some items he claims achievements while being Minister were items on which that would have been achieved automatically whether he was Minister of Agriculture or I was Minister of Agriculture, or whether there was no Minister of Agriculture.

● (1240)

Certain programs go on automatically. The Minister kept a score card as each program was triggered. He has boasted of having passed eight or nine agricultural Bills. I have the list before me. They do not do very much to change the way farmers live out in the country. Let me go through the listing to show how innocuous and how little action has been taken in the name of the Government caring and sharing in the agricultural sector.

First let us consider Bill C-4, which was to amend the Farm Products Marketing Agencies Act. This was the Act to which I just alluded which included the word "tobacco". That was all the effort the Government put into that Bill. The Government

refused it to be in effect for other agricultural products so that farmers would not have to rely on agencies like Canagrex to do their export marketing for them. The door has been slammed on farmers. They cannot take action on their own, and on top of that Canagrex has been closed up. Then we have Bill C-25, an Act to amend the Agricultural Stabilization Act. We reiterated the power of the Government to form a tripartite agreement for stabilization plans with the provinces and producers who were interested. I say reiterated advisedly because those powers were already in the old Act. The Minister simply wanted some word cleaning up to be certain of having the powers he hoped he had the way the Act was before. A slight revision was made which accomplished nothing more than had been available previously to producers, provincial Governments and the federal Government.

Bill C-29 was an Act to amend the Western Grain Stabilization Act. It did not change the amount of money going to farmers one iota. It gave the Government the power to issue an interim payment in advance of when the final payment could be calculated.

As for the Meat Inspection Act, something happened there. The Government decided to reduce the powers of the federal inspectors and to leave some of those powers up to the plants. We have had some offshoots of what can happen as a result of that with the tuna scandal. We have set ourselves up with the passage of that Act to some more instances of ministerial interference and interference at the company level. Some meat normally not considered fit for human consumption could slip through the system because inspectors paid by the plant, under the control of the plant and hired by the plant will not have the backing of the federal civil service.

We had to repeal the Prairie Farm Assistance Act. That agency had done nothing and had no employees for 20 years, but the Bill adds to the Minister's tally. He likes to tick off things that happen.

We had an Act to amend the Farm Improvement Loans Act. That moved the date forward another two or three years so that the Act could continue, something that Parliament does every couple of years, after its grandfather clause wears out. We amended also the Advance Payments for Crops Act so that the amount of cash advances could be increased. This was a positive move and it did not take any time in the House. We had an Act to amend the Seeds Act which concluded today. It says we shall have quality in seeds and that we can increase the amount of fines if somebody disobeys the Act.

Last, but not least, but in keeping with the kinds of moves made by this Government on behalf of agriculture, we had an Act to amend the Criminal Code dealing with pari-mutuel betting. It is now possible for someone to go to the racetrack and bet on the Kentucky Derby or other races occurring outside the country. This does not have a great immediate impact to help agriculture, but it is one of the Bills the Minister is using to count the great contribution this Government has made to agriculture.

At the same time, the Minister still has some things he is supposed to be looking after concerning Canagrex. He may