

Canagrex

would have the kind of fast track urgency that all of us—observers and delegation members—wanted desperately carried forward in GATT. In fact, we were outmanoeuvred and outsmarted by the European Community. We did not play as forceful and strong a role within the Cairns group at GATT as we should have. Consequently, we did not get what we had hoped for in our attempts to improve world trade. So we have to look for other pragmatic, sensible ways to expand our trade world-wide. We cannot expect GATT to come to our rescue. Canagrex was one such approach. I have to express, if only for my neighbour in the green stetson, my sense of regret that the Government so ideologically did away with that institution at a time when in fact it could have contributed greatly to this country's agricultural exports.

• (1740)

Mr. Althouse: Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the Hon. Member for Essex—Windsor (Mr. Langdon) would be kind enough to explain some of the philosophy we heard in the House today since I know he is an expert in economic and political philosophies. Would he explain what seems to me to be a contradiction in some of the speeches we heard today, particularly the speech of the Hon. Member for Crowfoot (Mr. Malone), wherein he said he had to oppose the Canagrex legislation. His constituents made him do it because of the powers which were listed in the Canagrex legislation, particularly those powers that permitted the agency on occasion to buy and sell.

Could the Hon. Member explain to us, out of his knowledge of economic and political philosophies, why it would be acceptable, and seems to be acceptable, for the Hon. Member for Crowfoot and his colleagues to accept those kinds of powers in provincial legislation, since virtually all of the provinces have identical or nearly identical provincial legislation permitting them to market, buy and sell and trade agricultural products, but not federal? Does this have something to do with a Conservative philosophy of federal and provincial rights, and so on, or is it simply something which is very hard to understand?

Mr. Langdon: I think, Madam Speaker, that the first answer to that is to say it is something which is simply very, very hard to understand. It is yet another contradiction in the whole series of contradictions which have been demonstrated today in the debate on this Bill. And not just today. This Canagrex Bill has ground its way slowly through the House of Commons for some years now. One hopes that eventually a more practical, common-sense approach to the promotion abroad of agricultural products could somehow be taken by Members opposite.

I would just like to speak about that for a moment, if I may, not from a somehow philosophic or econometric perspective but just from the perspective of farmers within my constituency. Hay producers, for instance, in my constituency, would like very much to have markets explored throughout the world for some of the output they produce. Soya bean producers are devastated by the prices they have to accept this year as a

result of the Chicago market perambulations. Wheat producers are hit by the U.S. Farm Bill and the subsidized sales of U.S. wheat, which have reduced their prices devastatingly. There are the corn producers. One could continue the list *ad infinitum*. These farmers face a tremendous crisis, and I think it is very important for a government of any stripe, but especially a government which sees itself as more pragmatic and more sensible, as the Minister, I know, likes to think of himself, to look at how this agency could have helped such farmers and farmers in the Minister's own constituency to reach other markets. I think a lot of the opposition to Canagrex in fact was bureaucratic opposition from the Department of External Affairs and the Department of Regional Industrial Expansion, and so on. I think those are the real culprits in Canagrex's death. But the Conservative Party is its pallbearer and it will have to bear the regrets of the country for what it has done.

Mr. Hopkins: I have a couple of questions for the Hon. Member, Madam Speaker. When the Hon. Member for Crowfoot (Mr. Malone) spoke, I am sure he succeeded in confusing some people because he started talking about the sale of grain. I would like the Hon. Member to comment on the relationship between grain and Canagrex. When the Hon. Member for Crowfoot began his remarks he said that the Hon. Member for Davenport (Mr. Caccia), who had just spoken, would not know a Hereford from a heifer. I think he would agree that sometimes a heifer can be a Hereford.

Mr. Wise: And the reverse is true.

Mr. Hopkins: I really think that remark indicated he was accusing the Hon. Member for Davenport of something that he himself did not appear to know anything about. Would the Hon. Member enlarge upon the statement of the Hon. Member for Crowfoot concerning grain and Canagrex? I am sure that must have been rather confusing to some people.

Mr. Langdon: I would certainly not want to enter into a lengthy debate on the Hereford-heifer debate which faces us. In Essex County, unfortunately, the dairy industry has been badly reduced in recent years. I would say that the comments of the previous speaker entirely overlooked the fact that the Wheat Board would continue to be the most prominent agency by far for selling grain. That is as it should be because it has a fine record. Canagrex was not expected in any sense to replace or undercut the activities of the Wheat Board.

I think the only conclusion to which one can come is that in this issue, as in so many others, the Conservative Party is fundamentally confused and contradicts itself. It talks about providing leadership to the country but in fact it provides confusion. It cannot sort out the kind of approach to agriculture, to trade, to industry, or to the whole range of our economic problems that would give this country the very badly needed direction which is so desperately needed in Canada in the 1980s.