

Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Act

has found ways to protect and improve the environment, be it through upgrading farms by tree-planting, maintaining ecosystems to protect wildlife, or furthering its cultural characteristics to make rural life more rewarding. Communities are part of that heritage and the quality of their social life must be improved.

What is the common link between those natural resources? The provinces look after their development because it is their constitutional responsibility.

Besides, the federal Government has a direct interest in those fields. Soils and forests do contribute to our international trade. Agriculture accounts for one-sixth of all Canadian economic activities. Last year, retail sales of food products were worth nearly \$60 billion. In 1983, agricultural exports were valued at \$10 billion and boosted our trade surplus by \$4.3 billion. This industry directly employs 1.4 million Canadians and creates 3 million jobs all told.

The forest industry ranks first in export trade since it brings in over \$11 billion each year. It directly employs more than 300,000 Canadians and indirectly about 700,000 additional workers in related industries.

The federal Government has every interest in making sure that those resources are properly administered since they stand as a guarantee of economic stability and jobs for future generations. The provinces as well as all men and women who use those resources share the same interest. We have seen to what extent the quality of such resources can vary from one region to the next, and that explains why each provincial Government has developed its own management strategy in those fields.

In the past, the federal Government has launched a variety of programs. Research has always been a priority with respect to soils, forests and water. Now and again, it has also involved the provinces through short-term financing programs under the Agricultural and Rural Development Act, through the Department of Regional Economic Expansion or again, more recently, through regional and economic development agreements. In addition, the Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration (PFRA) plays an active role in Western Canada as a federal body which provides direct services.

It is imperative that we foresee our needs for 1990 and years beyond, decide what must be done and how to do it. So far, we have been acting as we saw fit, but time has come to make sure that our resources produce sustained yields through more effective administration.

Mr. Speaker, I am looking at the clock and I feel that Hon. Members are getting nervous. We have very little time left and we do want this motion to be adopted, convinced as we are that action must be taken in those fields. We support the motion to refer this matter to the Standing Committee on Agriculture. We are anxious to hear its recommendations and, if need be, to make the right decisions and take the appropriate steps.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Is the House ready for the question?

[English]

It has been moved by Mr. Schellenberger, seconded by Mr. Nickerson:

That the Standing Committee on Agriculture be empowered to study and report on the advisability of amending the Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Act, to allow expansion of the Act into a National Farm and Forest Rehabilitation Act which would administer co-ordination of national action with respect to both wet and dry-land management; and making the Minister responsible for the consideration and implementation of the best methods to be adopted to secure the rehabilitation of farm and forest areas throughout Canada; and bring new technology into the hands of individual farmers and foresters and to co-ordinate national action with respect to drought/water/soil management as well as conservation, wet-lands management (including wildlife preservation), and the general enhancement of the quality of our rural heritage; and that the Administration of the National Farm and Forest Rehabilitation Act be granted the power to make, administer and supervise farm and forest loans to help operators recover from natural disaster conditions and that such loans be granted at reduced rates of interest for short periods of time to ensure rapid restoration of the operations in question.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Motion agreed to.

PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

[English]

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 45 deemed to have been moved.

EMPLOYMENT—STUDENT SUMMER JOBS—PROGRAM ANNOUNCEMENT. (B) SCOPE OF PROGRAM

Hon. Warren Allmand (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce-Lachine East): Mr. Speaker, on February 5, for the third time in this House, I asked the Minister of Employment and Immigration (Miss MacDonald) when she would announce the summer employment program. I asked that question in December, in January and also in committee. I pointed out to the Minister that it was customary to announce the summer employment program in December in order to give enough lead time to potential employers and applicants so that they could put together worth-while programs to hire students in the summer.

When I asked the Minister a third time on February 5, she said that the program would be announced the next day. In fact, the program was announced on February 6.

• (1800)

I might say that the two-month delay in announcing the program did not give justice to the program because, while it was worth \$205 million, as a result of the rate of inflation it would be worth less real money than in the previous year, and it had no specific allocation for community services. It also