

crossing the border are honest and have no intention of taking advantage of the situation at the border. However, I hear that there are places where it is very unpleasant to cross the border and that depends to a large extent on the type of men and women who are customs officers. The point that I am making is that it is important that new recruits do not feel that enforcement requires that they hassle people. I am glad to see that the processes through which the Department is going is actually toward establishing a system under which that will probably be the rule rather than the exception.

I hope that the process through which we are going in the passing of a series of Bills in this House is aimed at the very well articulated concern that the previous Minister of National Revenue put before the country. I am sure the present Minister agrees that he believed that while the responsibility of the officers of the Department must be recognized, the way they enforce the rules is as important as having the proper legislation and regulations. I simply wanted to take this opportunity to make that statement for the record.

● (1230)

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Question.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Althouse: On division.

Motion agreed to and Bill read the third time and passed.

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CANAGREX DISSOLUTION ACT

MEASURE TO ENACT

The House resumed from Wednesday, October 2, consideration of the motion of Mr. Layton (for the Minister of Agriculture) that Bill C-42, an Act to dissolve Canagrex and to amend certain Acts in consequence thereof, be read the second time and referred to a legislative committee.

Mr. Vic Althouse (Humboldt-Lake Centre): Mr. Speaker, I rise to resume debate on Bill C-42, an Act to dissolve Canagrex. I was waiting for some action from the government benches, hoping that someone would offer an explanation as to why this particular Bill is being put before us. The Government has not spent much time attempting to explain why it is dissolving Canagrex, which is not surprising when one sees the ambivalence with which the Government has viewed this agency.

The Conservatives supported Canagrex enthusiastically when the Bill to create Canagrex was first introduced in the House. The Conservative House Leader at that time, the Hon. Member for Yukon (Mr. Nielsen), praised the legislation at first reading. It is very rare for anyone to say anything about a

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Bill at first reading, yet the Conservative House Leader of the day did just that. He suggested that it was time for such a Bill to be introduced and that such a Bill was at the drawing-board stage under the Minister of Agriculture in the 1979 Conservative Government. According to the Member for Yukon, the Member for Elgin (Mr. Wise) had been responsible for that work and his Party welcomed the Bill with open arms.

The initial speeches which were made at second reading stage of the Bill show that the only criticism from the Member for Elgin was that not enough money would be spent to organize Canagrex. The Hon. Member for Provencher (Mr. Epp) suggested that this legislation was a great step forward in assisting the cattle producers in his riding to export calves to Israel.

The legislation progressed smoothly until the Member for Etobicoke Centre (Mr. Wilson), the current Minister of Finance, said that he believed the Conservative Party should be opposed to agencies such as Canagrex because it is a Crown corporation that would be involved to some extent in the selling and exporting of agricultural products. While he stated that it was his opinion and that of his Party that such agencies should not exist, he made no mention of the Canadian Wheat Board, the Dairy Commission and some other very popular agencies.

From that date forward, however, the die was cast, the Conservative Party turned 180 degrees and became the opponent of Canagrex, fighting it in committee and in the House. The agency had just been established when the Conservatives became the new Government. One of the first actions outlined in the Economic Statement, which was made shortly after the House resumed its new session, was that Canagrex would be dissolved.

When the Conservatives were in Opposition they advocated open Government. It was only after the Economic Statement that we caught a glimmer of what they meant by open government. No one in Canagrex had been told that their agency would be dissolved. They only heard about it on the night the Economic Statement was made. There had been no consultation or clear discussion as to what the agency had been doing prior to the announcement of its dissolution. That was unfortunate because it was quite clear that in the short five or six months it had been operating, Canagrex had been fairly successful. I remind the House that the start-up costs for an agency such as Canagrex are higher than the regular operating costs. However, even for an expenditure of some \$2.6 million in start-up costs, it was reported that Canagrex had already achieved sales worth \$16 million and had sales in progress that were worth something over \$100 million. However, once a decision has been made to close down an agency, it is hard to generate sales.

Many farm products had no means of being exported as a result of the vacuum created by the dissolution of this agency. Those farmers have no choice but to wait for an exporter to purchase their products. The farmers want to be assured that there is a market for their product, and they cannot conduct a