

Canagrex Act

They can make decisions when to plant and when to harvest. The bureaucracy in Moscow decides when the state farms will do that. They decide that there will be so many million hectares of wheat and so many of barley. It does not matter if there is too much rain for wheat and the farmers cannot get it seeded until July. They do not have the capacity to switch from wheat to barley. The individual farmers can do that. That is why the state systems fail.

This is why we have such a great need in Canada. We have to defend to the last person in this House when we see governments intruding in that field. I am sure that hon. members opposite do not want to see our agricultural heritage hurt.

When I look at the situation as a relatively new member, I see too many Crown corporations and too many decisions being taken by central bureaucracies. It does not matter whether a government is Liberal, NDP or Conservative. In some provinces with Conservative governments, there is too much government interference with the efficient production of food and its distribution.

When this bill gets to committee, I will want to ask questions about that. Do we really need an export corporation in view of the fact the world population is going to increase so massively? Other countries are becoming more and more centrally planned and are losing their food production capacity.

We will not need to go into the world markets in order to export. They will be beating down our doors. We should be spending our efforts planning and organizing within our nation to become self-sufficient and to produce exports. We will not have to hit the streets to sell. Other countries will bang our doors down; there is no doubt about it.

How will this corporation operate? Will it buy outright for cash? If so, what type of mark-up will it have? Will the corporation pay tax or will another Crown corporation be established which will knock out one, two or six private corporations which presently export food? If it knocks them out, we will lose the tax revenue from those export corporations and their employees.

Will this new replacement corporation pay income tax? If so, how will it be calculated? If it does not pay tax, that will create an unfair burden on the private export corporations which pay tax as well as individual Canadians. We will all have to kick in extra money to keep the corporation going.

The remuneration for new officers will be set by the governor in council. Many on this side, and I am sure many government members, believe that publicly-paid salaries should be public information. Possibly the minister could include that in this bill. We should try that. I am sure that no one from the agricultural community working in this Crown corporation would object to their salary being disclosed, just as the salaries of members of Parliament are. Let us put that in as an amendment.

The powers under Clause 14 are wide enough to permit Canagrex to take over processing and wholesaling plants and

industries. That will take it beyond being an export corporation. That clause should be looked at very carefully. Perhaps the Minister of Agriculture can tell us whether it is the intention of the government to have Canagrex expand into the producing and processing plants.

Will Canagrex go one step further, become vertically integrated, buy land and produce food? Clause 14 gives it that type of scope if future directors and future governments of whatever stripe want it to go that way. If we do not want that to happen, let us cut back on that clause so that Canagrex will be a genuine export corporation. We will leave it to future generations and future governments to debate in this House whether they want to take over the production of food.

There are many other matters I could speak about. I would like the minister to refer to an article in the January 27 *Globe and Mail* headlined "Public misled on Export Plan, Agriculture officials tell Ottawa." We will follow up on that in order to find out the response of the minister. In many ways it is a genuine criticism.

Maybe we should have a sunset law for this corporation so that after four or five years Parliament could take a genuine look at this corporation, rather than the existing situation where the 400 and some corporations can just go and on and on. Why not break with tradition? The agriculture committee has a special relationship that often supersedes politics. Let us be innovative in this area and see how it works. Let those who do not understand agriculture follow us. The minister nods his head yes. I hope he will follow up on that. That is all I will say at this time.

Mr. Albert Cooper (Peace River): Mr. Speaker, it is always a pleasure to speak in Parliament on a bill related to agriculture. Agriculture is probably the backbone and mainstay of the economy in my constituency. I take particular pleasure in having the opportunity to talk on Bill C-85 which creates Canagrex. The purpose of the bill is to promote the export of agricultural production.

Many people would say this is a concept that is long overdue. We can agree that we are in a position and time frame where we need a more aggressive world marketing system. We need to be aggressively marketing our Canadian agriculture products. We hope this will help the ailing commodity prices Canadian farmers receive. We know that low farm produce prices do not help our farmers, they help the consumers. How long can subsidization by the farmers last?

In the past little while the beef farmers have been severely hurt. Of course, there are a number of factors. One has been the increased demand for beef in our country. This will probably continue. We have now realized that we cannot depend solely on domestic markets, but must get involved in an aggressive world farm marketing program.

• (1750)

Last summer I had the opportunity to visit Taiwan. It was quite an experience. This country actually comprises fewer square miles than my entire riding. In that small country they