

such an agency as Canagrex for the exportation of Canadian agricultural products.

However, I should like to put to him the following question. Why did the former Liberal Government with Mr. Whelan as Minister of Agriculture create Canagrex four or five years ago, in 1982-83? Why did it not set up Canagrex in the seventies?

I know that the Liberal Party is sometimes quite slow. It did not react quickly as a government, but there was serious exportation problems for our farming products in the sixties and seventies. Why did it wait until the end of the Trudeau Government to set up such an important corporation for the Canadian people? Why during your 20-year mandate in this country did you wait till the end to set up such a corporation? You now agree that Canagrex was a fine idea and you would like to see it restored. However, why did you wait till the end of your mandate to set up Canagrex?

Mr. Lapierre: Mr. Speaker, I believe I must thank my colleague for his question. I can assure him that the decision to create Canagrex was not taken on the spur of the moment. Over the years, there were a lot of discussions about the creation of Canagrex and it was very difficult—and my colleague will remember since he has been here for some years—to convince the farming community that that agency was needed. It took a lot of persuasion, time and efforts on the part of the federal Minister of Agriculture to convince not only the farming community representatives, but also the numerous interest groups that emerged in an attempt to influence the Government.

And I think it explains why those groups from the Export Development Corporation, External Affairs and the Public Service as a whole succeeded in influencing the present Government. What happened is that the very arguments used against us over the years and that we finally overturned by creating Canagrex, those same arguments were presented to the Minister of Finance who bought them.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I believe that you can understand that our task was a difficult one but it is always difficult to bring about programs that are beneficial to the farming community because many groups from the urban community do not necessarily understand the fact that this agency is needed by our farming community as a whole. Farmers, as you know, represent but a small portion of the Canadian people, therefore they have to fight twice as hard. That is exactly what the Liberal Government and the then Minister of Agriculture did. We succeeded in establishing Canagrex but now, I think that the same somewhat reactionary pressure groups, that we faced, got the ear of the Finance Minister which explains why Canagrex is dismantled.

Military Equipment Export Restrictions

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I have the honour to inform the House that a message has been received from the Senate informing this House that the Senate has passed, without amendment, the following Bills: C-28, an Act to amend the Criminal Code (torture), C-44, an Act to amend the Federal-Provincial Fiscal Arrangements and Federal Post-Secondary Education and Health Contributions Act, 1977.

• (1700)

THE ROYAL ASSENT

[English]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I have the honour to inform the House that a communication has been received as follows:

Rideau Hall
Ottawa

April 14, 1987

Sir,

I have the honour to inform you that the Honourable Gérard V.J. LaForest, Puisne Judge of the Supreme Court of Canada, in his capacity as Deputy Governor General, will proceed to the Senate Chamber today, the 14th day of April, at 5.45 p.m., for the purpose of giving the Royal Assent to certain Bills.

Yours sincerely,
Léopold H. Amyot
Secretary to the Governor General.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: It being 5.02 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of Private Members' Business as listed on today's Order Paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS--MOTIONS

[English]

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

SUGGESTED REVIEW OF MILITARY EQUIPMENT EXPORT RESTRICTIONS

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops—Shuswap) moved:

That, in the opinion of this House, the Committee on External Affairs and International Trade should undertake a public review of the existing Canadian policy as it applies to the restrictions placed upon Canadian exports of military equipment.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have an opportunity to present this motion to the House for consideration.

This motion follows a number of efforts to communicate with the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Clark) requesting the same point as raised in this motion, and that is that the whole matter of Canadian exports of military equipment policy be referred to the Standing Committee on External Affairs and International Trade for evaluation in terms of its content, its applicability and suitability.