

Canagrex

need it then—we do now because of the U.S. Farm Bill. Deep down inside I am sure the Conservative Members of Parliament know better. They know we need Canagrex.

Very clearly, some well respected people in the agricultural community made their grievances known. I have a brief presented by A.E. Storey, who was the President and Chief Executive Officer of Canagrex, who appeared before the Standing Committee on Agriculture on March 11, 1985. He said in that brief that Canagrex was never given a chance. Canagrex had barely started and it was cut off by this Tory Government.

Mr. Lapierre: Shame.

Mr. Boudria: Yes, it is a shame. I agree with the Hon. Member for Shefford (Mr. Lapierre) who put it so eloquently to the House. It is indeed terrible that the Government could not see further than that and that Tory Members opposite, the back-bench Members of the Conservative caucus, did not go to see the Minister of Finance and tell him: "We will have none of this. If you do not reinstate Canagrex we will cross the floor". If those Hon. Members had the proper intestinal fortitude, that is what they would have said to the Minister of Finance. He would have been told in no uncertain terms that that worthwhile corporation, Canagrex, should be re-established. Canagrex was given less than a year.

Mr. Lapierre: Eight months.

Mr. Boudria: Yes, eight months. Again, my distinguished colleague, the Hon. Member for Shefford, is right. In those eight months it prepared a source list of Canadian commodities, what has been widely recognized as the most comprehensive available source of commodities available anywhere. It used this list to start selling around the world. It was doing a good job. Like any business, it had to be given a chance. It had to have a chance to start. One cannot just end a business a number of months after it is started and claim that it is not successful.

• (1550)

The other matter to consider is that Canagrex had a list of constraints that interfered with its original implementation. We have to remember that during the first few months of its existence Canagrex had some difficulty with existing government departments which did not always like to see its structure in place. There was also a lack of international recognition of the existence of the agency. Again, it had barely begun. Exporters sometimes saw Canagrex as part of the Government and did not initially trust the organization. But, again, those were all matters which were gradually coming around.

The fact that Canagrex was not provided with the same tools as some of the export agencies of other jurisdictions was also a problem. But it was no reason to kill Canagrex. It was a reason to enhance the program, to make it more viable and to make it more complete, ensuring that it would have better success on a world-wide basis.

Sitting across from me is the Chairman of the Standing Committee on Agriculture, usually a very reasonable Member of Parliament. He was there when the officials of Canagrex came before the committee. I am sure that deep inside he is convinced, as I am, that the agency should have continued to operate. It would be thriving today, and the Hon. Member knows that, just as well as I do.

The Ontario Chicken Producers' Marketing Board sent a letter to the then Minister of Agriculture on January 18, 1983. The Ontario Chicken Producers' Marketing Board is important in the province I represent. I have a number of chicken producers in my riding, not as many as dairy producers, but there is still a significant number. I want to read to Hon. Members what the board had to say. The letter is addressed to the Hon. Eugene Whelan, the former Minister of Agriculture, and a great Minister he was. The letter states:

Please be advised that this local board endorses the passing of the Canagrex Bill.

While the Canadian Chicken Industry is not, at this time, involved in exporting chicken, there might be a market for Canadian chicken which would benefit the entire Canadian Chicken Industry.

Since Canada has the expertise and natural resources to supply off-shore markets with chicken products, a Federal Organization designed for this purpose will be of great help in bringing it about.

We can see that the Secretary-Manager of the Ontario Chicken Producers' Marketing Board, John Janzen, was indeed very much in favour of the establishment of this organization.

I could go on and present to Hon. Members a number of briefs and a number of letters endorsing the principles of Canagrex. I could even read to Hon. Members speeches given by Conservative Members of Parliament when they spoke on Bill C-85 some years ago who spoke in favour of the establishment of Canagrex. Yet today at this very crucial time when we are debating the third reading of the dismantling, the dismemberment of Canagrex, not one Conservative Member is willing to stand up for agriculture. Not one of them is willing to stand up and say: "I will fight for Canagrex because it is in the best interests of my constituents". We do not hear that anywhere in this Chamber. I say to the numerous Conservative Members listening to this speech in the House at the present time, that, indeed, they should be a little bit more serious about this topic and stand up for the people of the constituencies that they represent. They should say to the Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson) that they want Canagrex to live again. They should tell him that they want it brought back from the ashes. The Government has tried to destroy it, and it is now left only in name. It is better late than never, I say to Conservative Members of Parliament.

That being said I invite members opposite to support me in defeating the measure that the Government wants to pass today. With the McGrath report now in place it is indeed appropriate for Conservative Members of Parliament to defeat a government measure such as this one. It will not bring down the Government. It will make the Minister of Finance red-faced, but he deserves that for not having been a little bit more