

*Oral Questions***ORAL QUESTION PERIOD**

● (1415)

FINANCE**FUEL EXCISE TAX EXEMPTION SOUGHT FOR FARMERS**

Mr. Jack Shields (Athabasca): Madam Speaker, because the rate of farm bankruptcies in Canada which have been caused by high overhead costs to farmers has reached the point where the survival of the agricultural industry is seriously threatened, I move, seconded by the Hon. Member for Wetaskiwin (Mr. Schellenberger) and the Hon. Member for Assiniboia (Mr. Gustafson):

That this House immediately take action to assist farmers to reduce their operating costs by introducing legislation which will exempt farmers from the payment of federal excise tax on fuels used in agricultural production.

Madam Speaker: Is there unanimous consent for this motion?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Some Hon. Members: No.

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CROWN CORPORATIONS**OPPOSITION TO CREATION OF NEW CORPORATIONS**

Mr. Charles Mayer (Portage-Marquette): Madam Speaker, Crown corporations were termed a dangerous hole in the taxpayers' pockets, and the Government's control of Crown corporations was severely criticized by the Auditor General in his annual report. Last night the Minister of Agriculture gave notice that the Government is now invoking closure in order to create Canagrex, yet another Crown corporation. The Opposition has moved several responsible amendments to the legislation that will allow Parliament effectively to scrutinize public funds being spent by Canagrex. As a result of closure, these amendments will not now have a chance of being adopted. Therefore I move, seconded by the Hon. Member for Wetaskiwin (Mr. Schellenberger):

That this House instruct the Government not to create any new Crown corporations before legislation is passed which allows Parliament to regulate this form of subgovernment properly.

Madam Speaker: Is there unanimous consent for this motion?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Some Hon. Members: No.

*[English]***BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE****TIME ALLOCATION FOR REPORT STAGE AND THIRD READING OF BILL C-85**

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Leader of the Opposition): Madam Speaker, in the absence of the Prime Minister, who indicated that he would be here, and in the absence of the Deputy Prime Minister, I will direct my question to the Acting Prime Minister, to whom I have also given notice. The Acting Prime Minister will know that the Canagrex Bill had been debated for only 90 minutes at the report stage. Yet last night, without warning, the Minister of Agriculture gave notice of an intention to introduce closure on Canagrex.

Some Hon. Members: Shame!

Mr. Clark: Will the Acting Prime Minister, on behalf of the Government, now agree not to proceed with closure on Canagrex?

[Translation]

Hon. Yvon Pinard (President of the Privy Council): Madam Speaker, since the question concerns the business of the House, I think I should make it clear what the facts of the matter are. I may remind the Hon. Members opposite that the Canagrex Bill was introduced more than a year ago, on December 8, 1981. It was debated on second reading for twelve hours and fifty minutes on five sitting days. In committee, the Bill was debated for three and a half months. Twenty-seven meetings were held, lasting a total of twenty-one hours and forty-five minutes, and finally, at the report stage, most of the amendments being proposed are similar to those that were defeated in committee. The Leader of the Official Opposition ought to know that for the Government to give notice pursuant to Standing Order 75C means that his party in particular has refused to co-operate in negotiating a reasonable schedule for completing debate on the Bill. Otherwise, the Government would have had no reason for using Standing Order 75C. Whenever a minister responsible for a bill sees no other alternative but to give notice in order to limit debate at any stage, it implies that despite discussions with the Official Opposition, no agreement could be reached on when debate could reasonably be concluded. Consequently, what the Minister of Agriculture did yesterday is entirely in accordance with the Standing Orders of this House and with parliamentary procedure, and indicates the Official Opposition's lack of good faith in refusing to negotiate an agreement for ending debate on this very important Bill.