

Time Allocation

Government tries it again, it is going to have a lot more days like the last few days. I see you are standing, Mr. Speaker; thank you.

Mr. Ian Deans (Hamilton Mountain): Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to rise and speak today on this attempt by the Government to limit the debate on Canagrex. I want to begin by saying that it is true that we favour Canagrex. We favour it because we believe it will better serve the vast majority of farmers in this country who have been unable up to now to gain access to markets outside the country for their produce. We believe that Canagrex will serve that kind of purpose.

It was for that reason that I thought the Conservatives were supporting Canagrex when the Bill was first brought forward, because they also spoke on much the same lines—the value of trying to increase the opportunity for Canadian farmers to find markets for their produce outside the country. In fact, if I recall correctly, there was even the hint of a suggestion that this was indeed a Tory Bill reincarnated, that the Conservatives had been intending to bring forth just such a Bill had they lasted longer than the nine months they were in office in 1979.

That is my recollection of what was said and I stand by it. I believe it to be true. I want, however, to deal with one aspect of what was said by the Member who preceded me. One of my colleagues asked me how you call someone a liar in the House of Commons. I told him you cannot. I then tried to think of a way of explaining what was said that was wrong, and I want to put it this way. We have steadfastly demanded accountability from Crown corporations. We in this Party, recognizing the key and crucial role which Crown corporations can and must play in the future development of Canada, on every single occasion where we have been present and voting, on every single occasion where debate has taken place, have insisted that there be measures of accountability included in the legislation which set up the Crown corporation. We did not always have control, but on this particular Bill the Auditor General has said in his own Report, the Annual Report just tabled, that in singling out Canagrex he did so as a model of accountability.

• (1550)

He pointed out that there were two particular aspects of it that he found most acceptable. One was that there is a sunset Clause calling for a full review of Canagrex by Parliament in five years' time, and I think the majority of people believe that is not a bad thing to have happen. More importantly, there is a Clause in the amended Bill, which we will be dealing with in the next few days when it comes from the Committee, requiring a mandatory audit by the Auditor General whenever he deems it necessary. Do you know where that amendment came from, Mr. Speaker? It was moved by my colleague, the Hon. Member for Prince Albert (Mr. Hovdebo). That amendment was accepted by the Government because it believed that accountability was important. That amendment came from the NDP, and for any Tory to stand in his place in the House and attempt to leave a false impression that somehow or other we

are responsible for the non-accountability of Crown corporations is absolute nonsense.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Deans: I say to you, Mr. Speaker, that my concern with this Bill is not with its substance. I believe the Bill will provide an opportunity for Canadian farmers who are currently unable to reach world markets. They will be able to improve their productivity, their sales and cash flow, and thereby improve their standard of living. That is what we favour in this country.

I want to say, however, to the Minister with regard to 75C, that I sincerely regret it has been brought in. I believe that if there are Conservative Members in this House who still believe that there are important things to be said about Canagrex, that there are still important points to be made, that we could have and should have negotiated a sufficient amount of time to allow those points to be made. My position has always been that where there are Members of Parliament who feel strongly enough about a topic, who feel that there is need for further discussion, who think that the public's view has not yet been adequately expressed, then it behooves the House of Commons to try and find that time. For that reason and that reason alone, I find myself unable to support the move by the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Whelan) to close off the debate.

I say that we will indeed support the Bill. We will do so because it is a good Bill and it is supported by any number of farm organizations from coast to coast. It will indeed provide all the things I have said. It is so accountable as to be a model in the eyes of the Auditor General, and I believe that with another two or three, perhaps four, days of debate, passage of the Bill could have been achieved without the use of 75C. If that could have been accomplished, then we could have had a House much more supportive of the measure, we could have had a community much more supportive of the measure, and with that we would have had a measure which undoubtedly would have had much more success in the future. That is what my worry is and for that reason alone we will not support 75C. But we say to the Minister that the Bill will provide a very necessary vehicle and one that we are happy to see in place.

[Translation]

Mr. Marcel Dionne (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I take part in this short debate on time allocation for Bill C-85. Mr. Speaker, it is very important for the House to realize how vital Bill C-85 is to an entire sector of our agriculture.

Mr. Speaker, I hear Members saying that this is closure, that we want to prevent people from having their say, and agricultural groups from pressuring the Government and discussing the alternatives proposed in this bill.

The fact of the matter is that we have worked in committee for at least eighty six hours during which thirty groups were heard and had an opportunity to express their views, and no one prevented them from doing so. Mr. Speaker, you will agree that after eighty-six hours and after hearing thirty different