

Canadian Egg Marketing Agency

If we are looking for the culprits who have caused high food prices, I suggest that we look at the middlemen and the large food corporations, at other factors such as transportation costs, advertising and packaging costs, promotion and things like that. If the price of eggs is too high but the price that the farmer receives is such that it provides him with only a basic income, then perhaps the time has come for the government to begin subsidizing basic foods to a greater extent than it does today. If we get rid of marketing boards or erode their power and effect, we will only drive the farmer out of business.

We have been discussing both formally and informally the question of consumer representation on marketing boards. What, exactly, does this mean? Does it mean we should appoint a \$40,000 a year housewife from among the upper class of this country? Just who are the consumers? What are their interests? Would they understand the position of the farmer? If we are to have consumer representation on marketing boards, then why not have consumer representation on the boards of corporations, among the medical profession and legal societies? After all, they too deal with the consumers of this country.

I am saying that we should look at this question in more ways than one. Let us not use this inquiry to channel an attack on orderly marketing and marketing boards. The Forbes report which was presented yesterday is being used to fight orderly marketing in Canada. I shall not tolerate this sort of thing, and neither will my party. We should have marketing boards, and their powers should be strengthened. The producer should have as much control and bargaining power in the marketplace as possible.

I suggest we should also look at the powers of such corporations as Safeways, Loblaws, the huge meat packing plants, and the CPR and their freight rates, as well as other farm input costs such as fertilizer and farm machinery. All these costs are reflected in the end price that the consumer pays for food. Our farmers and our workers realize that they have many things in common. We must strengthen the organization of our workers through their unions, as well as the organization of our farmers through farm organizations and marketing boards. I make that appeal as we send this matter to committee and I hope all hon. members will keep these factors in mind instead of going down a narrow back alley with an attack on marketing boards as their sole purpose.

Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, much has been said about the Canadian Egg Marketing Agency, both outside and inside this House, by myself and by others. I said quite a bit about it in my speech the other day during the throne speech debate. I want to repeat only one thing. Several members have stressed today the kind of hearing they feel it should be. I am going to use the same story that I used the other day: I hope we do not enter this matter like the Texas hanging judge, Judge Roy Bean—"I am going to give you a fair trial and then hang you."

The House approved earlier today the putting of a motion to establish a committee, so let the committee go about its work in an efficient and objective manner. Let the nation get all the facts which it has not received to this date. That is why I am very much in favour of this hearing. I was not forced to agree to the hearing. The

[Mr. Nystrom.]

Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) said to me, "Mr. Minister, you do what you think best". No one flayed me into making any decision such as this. It had become obvious to me that the nation needed the facts, that they were not being presented to the people in the manner which, as far as I am concerned, they should have been. Even what I said was not presented properly; half the things I said were misinterpreted.

Every member of this House, Mr. Speaker, has received a memo from my office outlining the history of egg marketing and also the principles and operations of a proper marketing board. I suggest that all members of the House of Commons who participate in this committee read that memo as well as anything else that will tell them about the principles of good marketing boards and what the egg history of this nation is really all about. Let us pass the motion and get on with the business of the committee as soon as possible.

Motion agreed to.

PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

[English]

SUBJECT MATTER OF QUESTIONS TO BE DEBATED

Mr. Deputy Speaker: It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 40, to inform the House that the question to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment is as follows: the hon. member for York Centre (Mr. Kaplan)—National defence—Downsview air base—Possibility of releasing land for housing development.

[Translation]

It being five o'clock, the House will now proceed to the consideration of private members' business as listed on today's order paper, namely notices of motions (papers), private bills and public bills.

● (1700)

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BILLS

[English]

BRITISH NORTH AMERICA ACT, 1867

MEASURE TO ABOLISH THE SENATE

Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre) moved that Bill C-205, to amend the British North America Act 1867, (abolition of the Senate), be read the second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am grateful to my colleague, the hon. member for Yorkton-Melville (Mr. Nystrom), for seconding my motion for the second reading of this bill, but I had hoped the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Whelan) would do that. After all, there are few members in this