

Farm Products Marketing Agencies Bill

Mr. John Roberts (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Regional Economic Expansion): I shall have the matter looked into and try to have an answer for the hon. member as soon as possible, Mr. Speaker.

* * *

[Translation]

PRIVILEGE

MR. MARCEAU—LATE AUGUSTIN BRASSARD, FORMER MEMBER FOR LAPOINTE

Mr. Gilles Marceau (Lapointe): Mr. Speaker, a man whom many of us admired and esteemed for years in this House has just passed away tragically. The death of Augustin Brassard, who sat here with so much devotion, guilelessness and sincerity, brought back memories and moved the hearts of those who rubbed elbows with this very humane Quebecer whose stature and generosity will never be fully known because that prominent citizen was totally discreet.

Augustin Brassard devoted himself in difficult circumstances, at times to thankless jobs. He was one of those who give without demanding any guarantee whatsoever. The House will surely want to join with me in remembering this late colleague and offering his family our most sincere condolences.

Mr. Speaker: Order. May I remind the hon. member that questions of privilege, even in exceptional circumstances such as this one, cannot be raised without notice. The hon. member could have given notice to the Chair, as required by the Standing Orders.

In any event, I agree that these are very special circumstances.

• (3:20 p.m.)

[English]

GOVERNMENT ORDERS**FARM PRODUCTS MARKETING AGENCIES BILL**

ESTABLISHMENT OF NATIONAL MARKETING COUNCIL AND AGENCIES

The House resumed from Tuesday, June 29, consideration of Bill C-176, to establish the National Farm Products Marketing Council and to authorize the establishment of national marketing agencies for farm products, as reported (with amendments) from the Standing Committee on Agriculture, and motions Nos. 1, 5 and 22 (Mr. Horner).

Mr. G. W. Baldwin (Peace River): Mr. Speaker, on with the debate! Let joy be unconfined today. We are back here because the government obviously is in some doubt as to the value of the program contained in Bill C-176, which in the last Parliament had a very undignified and unhappy career in the name of Bill C-197.

I want to support the amendments which appear in the name of the hon. member for Crowfoot (Mr. Horner). I do

[Mr. Coates.]

so in spite of the fact that the government has made a proposal which, if accepted, will go a long distance toward removing the offensive and repugnant features of this bill as it stands today. We have also proposed an additional change, the exclusion of cattle and cattle producer, which we think will take the bill even further and make it still better. It appears to me, however, that we are engaged in debating the bill as it was originally introduced into this House, and reprinted following the committee meeting, so I have to deal with it on that basis.

Despite the fact that there are aspects of this bill which are not attractive to us, we still believe it is a bill with which we could live if it contained the amendments which have been proposed; but we have to proceed on the basis that this may not happen and as if we were dealing with the bill in the form in which it was reprinted.

What is the purpose of the amendments proposed by the hon. member for Crowfoot? At the time he conceived them—and they are honourably born—we were in a very serious situation with regard to certain actions by some provinces of Canada which were tending toward the balkanization of this country. There was, Mr. Speaker, an action pending in the courts of the province of Quebec with respect to which this government did not have the intestinal fortitude to appear and to make representations and ask to be represented by counsel at that time. We had reason to believe that for political purposes this government was prepared to stand by and allow the benefits of the federal system to go down the drain. That is one of the main reasons why the hon. member for Crowfoot has introduced his amendments.

Mr. Horner: We asked the Minister of Justice (Mr. Turner) about it.

Mr. Baldwin: As my friend the hon. member for Crowfoot has said, we asked the Minister of Justice (Mr. Turner) on numerous occasions what he was going to do, and we also asked the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) what the government was going to do. As usual we were met with dissimulation, divisiveness and delay—the three “D’s” upon which this government is founded, especially at question time.

It is principally for these reasons that the hon. member for Crowfoot has moved the amendments. We all know what happened. At a later stage the province of Manitoba enacted legislation which was challenged. Ultimately it arrived at the Supreme Court of Canada, and as the government could no longer exercise its delaying tactic it was challenged by members of this party to appear at that court and take a position. Up to that time it had shown no indication at all of its constitutional responsibility with regard to this matter.

I do not think it will do us any harm at this time to pause for a moment and look at the situation which could have developed and to look at the situation upon which these amendments were predicated.

The federal structure in a country such as Canada means more than language, geography and national unity; it is a great movement toward permitting the free flow of goods and services and people from one end of the country to the other. Without that this is not—

Mr. Guay (St. Boniface): Mr. Speaker—