

Farm Products Marketing Agencies Bill

under this bill, of controlling production. If I remember correctly, the provisions of the bill which provide for the establishment of the boards enable these boards to issue production permits and, by the same token, to determine, if required, production quotas. I think that at the same time the bill should include a special provision to guarantee producers the prices that would enable them to get a decent income.

The problem in agriculture is always the same: we constantly struggle to get decent prices without fleecing consumers, in short, prices which will allow producers to make reasonable profits.

The bill also contains provisions to balance production volume and market possibilities. I do not quite agree on that because market conditions are always determined by consumer purchasing power. And heaven knows it is a problem in too many families.

The real extent of the market is not known, according to surveys made by the Senate Committee on Poverty. The only way the committee may have helped the people was by determining to what extent the economic system may have prevented production from reaching the table of the consumer. In any event, there seems to be disagreement with regard to the report of the committee and rich people were certainly not found in every area of the country. Indeed, there are families that do not have exactly what they need, not only to eat but to dress decently.

That is why I say the bill will not achieve all its aims; but it will help get more agricultural produce into the stores and that will be one step ahead. One organization will enable the producers to prove that they have worked, that they produced something which the consumers can use.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, for all those reasons, I think that we should continue to seriously consider the proposed amendments in order to find out whether there might not be one which could likely improve the bill, so that it could unite Canadians instead of dividing them. For no consideration whatever would I like hon. members to my right, who represent constituencies of other provinces, to think that our positions are those of mean Canadians who consider only their area or their province. But the fact remains that every member is conscientious enough—I am sure—to represent honestly and properly his constituency, his electors and to follow up on the representations made to him.

● (5:10 p.m.)

I would not like it to be said that because the province of Quebec supports the best provisions of this bill, it regards the bill as perfect. That is not what I mean. Even if only 50 per cent of the provisions of the bill were good, we should use them and later on improve the legislation so as to really reach its objective, namely to put all farm products on the national market so as to make them available to the Canadian people.

As I already said, I think it is extremely regrettable that this bill does not include a provision enabling those marketing boards to channel in the same way all the products that will be imported from other countries.

[Mr. Lambert (Bellechasse).]

I see that an amendment in this regard has been put on the order paper. A few moments ago, the Minister of Agriculture mentioned it and said that other agencies and departments were sharing this responsibility and that we should not multiply the number of agencies in the same field.

I submit that it does not amount to multiplying the agencies. They could remain under the authority of the Department of Industry, Trade and Commerce but with the possibility for the marketing boards to demonstrate that they are acting in a relevant way when they grant import licences for some farm products which are in direct competition with Canadian products.

I am well aware that there is presently such a possibility of control by the Department of Industry, Trade and Commerce but God knows how difficult it is to have this legislation applied, these restrictions enforced when it is necessary. We had to make representations to our farm organizations. Federated Co-op had to take action several times to draw the attention of the authorities on a particular field so as to give fair protection to Canadian farmers. For this reason, I hoped the bill would have contained a provision to regulate the activities of people engaged in international trade with a view to profits only and not as a service to the community.

This form of trade must be regulated in an intelligent way so as to allow farmers to fulfill the objectives spelled out in the bill, namely to give farmers the possibility of living decently.

[*English*]

Mr. H. W. Danforth (Kent-Essex): Mr. Speaker, I listened to the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Olson) with a great deal of interest. I was disappointed in that I felt he might have spent less time dealing with the picayune matter of an advertisement in a newspaper and more time defending the reasons for the government's adopting the measures in this bill. This is one of the most important bills to be dealt with by the Committee on Agriculture in the last 50 years.

In the short time allotted to me I should like to deal with the necessity of the amendments to this legislation. As you are aware, we in the province of Ontario are familiar with marketing schemes, agencies and marketing commissions. A number of marketing operations and bodies are now operative in this province as in other regions of Canada. The reason is very simple. One of the earliest marketing schemes was started in my own riding, in Chatham, Ontario. Similar schemes were commenced many years ago in the province of British Columbia. We are very familiar with this type of operation, as they are in the province of Quebec and in most provinces where marketing schemes exist to varying degrees.

A previous speaker stated that the concept of national marketing legislation is not new. For many years successful marketing boards have been working for the betterment of the farm community in their local or regional areas. These people naturally felt there was no reason why this proposal, if extended nationally, should not work to the benefit of a great many more engaged in the production of agricultural products. This is not a new