

Export Development Act

coming in in order to meet its bills. The board of directors requires someone who has knowledge of business, if the business is to be kept intact. Most public servants—there may be a few—have not had that experience. Second, we need people on the board with ordinary, everyday horse sense who can adjust their thinking to the particular items before them.

I would like to relate a story concerning red meat. It comes under the red meat section of the federal Meat Inspection Act. Public servants in the City of Calgary had an opportunity to use good, ordinary horse sense but they did not do so. As I have already indicated to the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Whelan), I think this story is a disgrace to the Department. I hope the Minister in charge of this particular Bill will not condone this type of behaviour on the part of the board of directors or public servants who will be dealing with the export of Canadian goods.

A merchant in my riding operates an excellent food store in which is located a meat counter. He had the opportunity to provide an order worth \$100,000 to another Canadian who had a boat built in Japan. The food was not going to Japan; it was to supply that Canadian boat. It was a different thing entirely. Even if it were going to Japan, good, ordinary horse sense should have been used. When the merchant visited the export people in Calgary he was told that he could not fill that order. He asked why and was told that in the first place he did not have a wholesale permit. He said that he was a wholesaler and that he had a wholesale licence. They told him that even in that case he could not do it because he sold fresh meat over the counter in his store.

This law was put into the books in 1903. It is antiquated, it is ridiculous, it is crazy. Simply because a man sells fresh meat over a counter should not deny him the privilege of dealing in the export business. He was not taking meat from the counter to fill that order. His meat is inspected like that of anyone else.

In the second place he was told that he required an export licence. He indicated that that was fine if that was provided in the regulations and asked how he could obtain one. The public servant told him that he could not get one. When he asked why, he was told that it was because he sold fresh meat over the counter. Anyone in business would not have stopped there, but they closed the books; they told him that he could not make the deal.

Then what happened? Canadians and Albertans lost the benefit of a \$100,000 deal because the shipbuilder felt that he could not monkey around with it all day, all month or all year. He went to Japan where he filled his boat with supplies. People in the export business require good, ordinary, everyday sense. That is not evident in the Department today. We lost that business. The farmers lost that business. The merchants lost that business. Canada lost the work involved.

The Government talks about providing money for employment but this is an example of employment being denied as a result of a silly, crazy rule passed in 1903. The Minister of Agriculture will not change it because his bureaucrats have said no. Will we have people like them on this board? The board should be able to indicate that a rule such as this is not

sensible and change it. It should be able to remove such an antiquated law from the books so that merchants can obtain similar orders and sell their meat. Then other men who sell meat over the counter could become involved in the export business. They would not provide meat from their counters; that is for customers who go to their stores. The meat which the merchant in my riding sold over the counter was for people from the Cochrane area. He could have taken meat from the packing plant and sent it to wherever he wanted.

Often people who are appointed by government are afraid to speak. They think they are under the control of the minister who appointed them. That is not good enough in our country today. We want people on this board with some business knowledge and ordinary horse sense who are prepared to meet the challenge of providing Canadian goods to the markets of the world to increase the buoyancy of the economy.

This board could also tackle inspection problems. For years there have been provincial and federal inspectors. If their methods or standards were different, I could understand it, but I have been told by the federal department and its inspectors and by the provincial department and its inspectors that each use the same standards. Is it so difficult for two governments to get together so that they will not duplicate the work? As long as merchants are following the standards and providing meat to other countries as set out in the Act, there is no problem, but provincial and federal inspectors with the same training continue to do the same work. It does not make sense. In some cases federal inspectors travel to a packing plant to inspect meat under the federal Act. At the same time provincial inspectors inspect the same meat under the provincial Act. How ridiculous can we get!

We should ensure that taxpayers' dollars are used sensibly, not in this ridiculous way. We want a board that will tackle the problems. Under international trade agreements Canada certifies meat products for export to foreign countries and meets the requirements of the importing country. This is sensible. If we are to export meat or other goods to Japan, Korea, Europe, Spain or England, we have to meet their requirements. A board of directors composed of businessmen with ordinary horse sense will ensure that these requirements are lived up to. I support the amendment.

● (1520)

Mr. Murray Cardiff (Huron-Bruce): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to join in debate on this Bill at the present stage because it provides an opportunity to bring a perspective to bear that I think is needed as a matter of simple justice. Several of my colleagues have already alluded to the need for ensuring that the Export Development Corporation is responsive to the needs of the private sector, and we have argued for an amendment to the Bill which will ensure that the board of EDC is not dominated by public servants.

I want to comment on this matter from the point of view which was expressed by the private sector three years ago when a special committee of this House sat to consider the advisability of establishing a national trading corporation. As