

Farm Products Marketing Agencies Bill

tee centred around the concept of allowing regions which have a comparative advantage to continue to have that advantage. This is the only way we can maintain a national, efficient agricultural industry as suggested in one clause of the bill. If this is what is intended, this amendment should be accepted and some changes should be made.

The amendment deals with the question of "over a period of five years immediately preceding the effective date of the marketing plan". I think it would be far better if it were over a period of five years immediately preceding the establishment of changes in quotas. This would allow a moving five-year period and a far slower change in the quota system. As I understand this amendment, after the effective date of the marketing plan the last five years can be looked at and adjustments made accordingly. After first establishing the quotas, they no longer have to look at the previous five years. I do not think this is right.

Members of this House and officials of the Department of Agriculture have long been guided by the price stabilization theme. The minister and this government have abused it. In their wisdom, they have not tried to keep up the prices of agricultural products. That is their decision and they must account to the voters for it at the next election. In that bill there is a moving ten-year period in which agricultural products are priced accordingly at an 80 per cent minimum. In most cases the government has accepted the 80 per cent minimum and has gone no further.

I see the minister slapping his desk, indicating approval. The theme of that bill is a moving ten-year period and it sets an 80 per cent minimum. In setting prices for commodities, the cost of production should be taken into consideration. This bill was debated long before the present government assumed office. They probably do not remember the debate that centred around the cost of production figure that was written into that bill. Therefore, they pay no heed to it. It is regrettable that they do not.

In any event, we should have a moving five-year period in which changes in quota patterns would develop. I do not know why this government is so afraid. They think the agencies will be guided by the principle of comparative advantages of historic marketing patterns. That is why they want to change these words to "shall consider". This definitely weakens the amendment. It makes the amendment hardly worth spending 90 minutes on when our time is so severely rationed. We have to deal with 30 amendments before ten o'clock. I can think of many amendments more worthy of spending 90 minutes on than an amendment that changes the words "be guided by" to "shall consider". It is regrettable that the government has done this. It destroys the best part of the amendment.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Roch La Salle (Joliette): Mr. Speaker, I would like to make some comments on this amendment. I think that we worry too much about the allocation of production quotas, which will be done in due course. We seem to forget that after all there will be a negotiation at the provincial level and that the production quotas will be established with the approval of the provinces.

[Mr. Horner.]

I would like to refer to the remarks made by the hon. member for Moose Jaw (Mr. Skoberg) who fears that some members might be tempted to express a provincial point of view. I would be dishonest if I were to say that I do not stand up for the interests of Quebec. Of course, my first duty is to work for my province and I concede to all hon. members that this is also their first duty. I do not consider it honest to claim that one stands up for the interests of Canada by forgetting at the same time to stand up for the interests of one's own province.

Working in the interest of my province is also working in the interest of Canada.

I should not like to dwell further on the matter, nor should I want to miss the opportunity to express my hope that the bill will have favourable results for my province. The province of Quebec, as indeed any other province, can benefit from the bill because of the co-operation and co-ordination between all Canadian provinces it involves.

The concrete results of the legislation are based on co-ordination and on the negotiations which can take place around one table. The purpose of Bill C-176 is to unite, for once, the ten provinces in the setting up of production quotas. Such discussions and negotiations will eventually achieve a control of production, advantageous for both small and medium producers who are now experiencing difficulties.

It is therefore wrong to claim that small producers will suffer hardship as a result of these production quotas. Quite the contrary, when these quotas will be guaranteed to them, they will have the certainty of selling their products at normal prices and this, I believe, justifies hopes of better times.

• (8:30 p.m.)

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel): Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. Members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel): The question is on the amendment to motion No. 27. Shall the amendment carry?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): On division.

Amendment (Mr. MacEachen) to motion No. 27 agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel): The question is now on motion No. 27 as amended. Shall the motion carry?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

An hon. Member: On division.

Motion No. 27 (Mr. Knowles, Winnipeg North Centre, for Mr. Gleave) as amended, agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel): Pursuant to the grouping made on April 27 last, the House will now proceed to the consideration of motions Nos. 2 and 3 standing in the name of the hon. member for Crowfoot (Mr. Horner). Motion No. 2 reads as follows:

That Bill C-176, an act to establish the National Farm Products Marketing Council and to authorize the establishment of national