

*Private Members' Business*

the bargaining power between the buyers and sellers is not even close to equal.

Even though some people might argue that the new information technology permits people on farms to link into the latest marketing information. Information alone does not provide those farmers with the ultimate marketing power that they require, namely, to be able to fill a whole shipload of a product and to provide hundreds of boxcar loads of the product to a particular purchaser in the required time, of the required volumes and grades necessary. Only an agency acting on behalf of all of the producers can hope to perform that function.

The fact that information is a little faster now than it was in the 1930s does not address the real problem of marketing, which is the ability to put together large amounts of product to fit the needs of the very large corporate buyers that are buying internationally these days.

• (1110)

In the 1970s Parliament had an opportunity to put a bill before the country that would permit the various provincial marketing boards. These have to be put together on a provincial basis because, as members know, agriculture production is under the aegis of the provinces in our Constitution.

It is only when the product is marketed across borders that the federal sphere is infringed on and federal rights are taken into account. Therefore provincial marketing boards that wish to market product that is handled by a marketing board in another province have to apply to the federal jurisdiction for the power to go beyond their borders.

This is usually granted relatively simply. However it does not take away the problem that exists for all commodities not already under a national plan of competing one province against the other.

I was involved in the early 1970s in putting together a marketing board for hogs in the province of Saskatchewan. It was at about the same time that similar boards were put together in Manitoba, Alberta and British Columbia. They each followed the example of Ontario a few years previous to that.

We had worked very hard to come together as those four western provinces to offer hogs to foreign and domestic buyers over one desk. We had political agreement. We had agreement from the farmers involved. Yet when the final signatures were required on all the multitude of agreements that this required, the heads of each of the boards found it very difficult to put their signatures to paper because that would have seen the demise of at least three of the positions. We do not need four presidents in order to run one regional marketing board. It fell down at that level.

We need some federal guidelines and federal guidance if we are going to be able to achieve the coming together that is required if producers of the various commodities are going to be efficient and useful in meeting the market trends that are out there right now.

The marketing board concept is really not much different for those who are interested in history of marketing than the power the state gave four and five hundred years ago to corporations. It is a power that over time has been granted to corporations simply on application.

Even up to 30 or 40 years ago to strike a new corporation, the provisional board of directors had to come to the House of Commons and the Senate in order for that corporation to be set in motion and to be created. That has not been the case for many decades.

Yet in order for farmers to form an organization that would have similar powers in the marketplace, this ancient institution still requires that a special bill be prepared and that special requirements be made. We still have to be very cognizant of the federal-provincial powers. We have to go through the process of proposing, as I am, a shell of an agency that would be able to function nationally that the provincial agencies can link into.

Passing this legislation would not instantly create a national marketing agency. It would only be an effective national agency when the provincial marketing boards decide to avail themselves of the powers that are there in the federal act which would be passed.

• (1115)

This slow, cumbersome process could have been sped up if in the early 1970s when the farm products marketing councils were established, and the national farm products marketing act which brought those agencies into effect had permitted the usage of national legislation for all farm products. However, there was some agitation on the part of mainly Alberta cattlemen concerning rights to establish an agency that would include management of supply, which is only a normal thing for any marketing agency.

Ask General Motors, Ford or Beatrice Foods. Any of the big players always have a good handle on their supplies. They are manufacturing the product. They make certain they do not manufacture or process more than they have sales for. They make certain they are able to manage the product so it arrives at the customer's door on the day the customer wants it; not later, not sooner, right on time. This is the kind of service the marketing boards have performed and can perform for producers who are part of a marketing agency.

The problem with the provincial agencies is that they often are not large enough to meet the kind of bargaining conditions of the corporations they deal with. Most of the processors and handlers of potatoes are huge international conglomerates. They have access to markets all over the world. When dealing with a