

Farm Products Marketing Agencies Bill

Mr. Rose: The difficulty we face in dealing with this issue is that we may serve one interest which we would like to support and at the same time serve another with which we would rather have no part.

In their brief to the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Olson) on November 22, the provincial ministers took great pains to point out that the independent farm operation is the kind of operation we should be supporting. Independent producers should be getting the benefit of any kind of legislation, subsidy and support, but not the integrated operation or the factory farm operation which needs no help.

I think it is obvious that if we base supply-management quotas on existing production, and if that production or the bulk of it is in the hands of the integrators, supporting this amendment means we are supporting the integrators at the same time. It is not a black and white decision. We take this position on this bill reluctantly for the misgivings I have outlined.

We should be well aware that words of praise for C-176 may come back to haunt us because the bill is not the solution to Canadian agriculture. This is far from the be all and end all to save the particular independent agricultural unit in this country. Bill C-176 may not stop the population drift to the cities. It may not help the marginal operations on which there exist very few opportunities for young people to carve out a career. It may not prevent the drift from an independent, self-reliant family situation in a rural setting to a tenant of the urban high rise.

This bill is very limited in scope. It has an urgency about it because of the state of the poultry industry. That is about as far as we can go. We should also remember that if we pass this amendment and this bill, there are several other steps fraught with danger and barriers to be taken before any kind of marketing agency, or marketing plan resulting from that agency, can become a reality. It will be necessary to have a plebiscite and all ten provinces must agree. If all ten provinces do not agree, constitutionally there is nothing to prevent the province that opts out from insisting on its constitutional rights to ship into the controlled market area. The success of Bill C-176 then really depends on the co-operation of all the provinces if it is to work.

The bill before us was motivated by an attempt on the part of the government to avoid a constitutional crisis created by interprovincial trade barriers. The government dilly-dallied for months rather than assert federal authority against interprovincial trade barriers.

In conclusion, may I remind the hon. member for Crowfoot of one other thing. He is concerned about the trend to bigness in the poultry industry. This trend is not confined to the poultry industry; it also applies to the cattle industry. The greatest objection we have to this particular bill is that cattle are no longer specifically named because of what I regard as an unethical kind of lobby prompted by the big cattle interests.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. I regret to interrupt the hon. member. Pursuant to the order made earlier today, his time has expired.

[Translation]

Mr. Léonel Beaudoin (Richmond): Mr. Speaker, I would like to say a few words about this amendment apparently

[Mr. Horner.]

designed to bring some change to the first draft of the bill, but which, in fact, does not change much.

When the hon. member for Crowfoot (Mr. Horner) moved the amendment, I was hoping that it would be more explicit. In that part of the clause with which the amendment deals, we read:

"farm product", for the purpose of Part I, means any natural product of agriculture and any part of any such product and, for the purpose of the other provisions of this Act,

That means that the words "beef", "veal" and "related products of beef and veal" are kept in the bill. In short, nothing is changed. That shows, however, that the act does not use the words "to require that beef producers", "to require that veal producers" be members of a marketing agency, or does not impose a marketing agency on them.

The amendment also says, and I quote:

—any other natural product of agriculture and any part of any such product in respect of which the Governor in Council is satisfied, as a result of declarations by provincial governments following plebiscites, or otherwise, that the majority of the producers thereof in Canada is in favour of the establishment of an agency under section 17 with powers relating to that product;

The words "or otherwise" are not properly used here. What is meant here, I believe is that, under the terms of the act, a small group of producers who are more active than the others could choose to be governed by a marketing agency even without a plebiscite. In fact, the first amendment proposed by the member for Crowfoot (Mr. Horner) did say, and I quote:

following plebiscites.

It did not say "or otherwise" or else I misread it. That does not improve the bill right now, I think, and producers are still liable to fall under the jurisdiction of marketing agencies. Should there appear to be a majority, the producer of a certain commodity will have to fall under that jurisdiction.

I will now refer to eggs and poultry. All hon. members know that this bill will not solve the egg and poultry problem because if ever such marketing exists the legislation under consideration will probably curb dumping between provinces since all of them will have to come to an agreement. However, this will not help the small producer. He will have to produce under quotas and the integrated operator will then come into the picture. Normally, the big producer having enough money to buy quotas will purchase his neighbour's operation because he prepares the feeds, the grain himself. He is in position to do it, he has all that is needed to do it. So, he leaves no profit to anyone but himself; he will buy the operation of the small producers who are in a difficult financial position. He will buy quotas of small producers and this way, big producers will be the only ones in business as is the case for instance in the southern part of the United States where there are exceptionally big hatcheries. The same person produces eggs, runs the hatchery, raises chickens and operates the slaughter-house and the supermarket.

● (4:10 p.m.)

[English]

Mr. Bruce Howard (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce): Mr. Speaker, I wish to