

Farm Products Marketing Agencies Bill

produce more powdered milk than you can sell on world markets, that results in losses for farmers. If the hon. member wants to stockpile powdered milk, like we saw a few years ago at Granby, Quebec—

Mr. Paproski: That is poor marketing.

Mr. McBride: It would be poor marketing if we dumped it on world markets at depressed prices. The hon. member ought to know that the major portion of the \$130 million that goes to the Canadian Dairy Commission is going into the dairymen's pockets now, and that the average dairy farmer is better off than he ever was previously. The hon. member is displaying his lack of knowledge.

When I heard the hon. member for Kent-Essex say he was going to vote against the bill on third reading, it startled me to realize that what he was really saying was that he wanted a position in agriculture whereby the big man can become bigger and the small man could be squeezed out. Where there is no control then we will overproduce and overproduce and prices will have to be deflated. Jungle law will exist in Canadian agriculture and farmers like those I represent in eastern Ontario, where there are many marginal farms, will be the first to be squeezed out of the industry.

Farmers do not get a pink slip to notify them that they are laid off. They are simply starved out economically, which is the cruellest way to be laid off from any type of employment. If that is what the official opposition want, it is not what I want, and I am very grateful that it is not what the government wants. That's the reason this is a valuable bill for Canadian agriculture.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel): Order. I regret to interrupt the hon. member, but his time has expired.

Mr. James A. McGrath (St. John's East): Mr. Speaker, I am neither a farmer nor the son of a farmer, but I am encouraged to participate in this debate, something which I had anticipated with some trepidation, by having been here tonight and heard a lawyer from London, a school teacher from Peterborough and a preacher from the Ottawa Valley. I have not seen anything like it since Hon. Paul Martin made his famous soybean speech in the House a few years ago.

I come from a province that is agriculturally deficient, yet there is concern in Newfoundland over this bill. I hope to set out the reasons for this concern, and to set out the reasons why I am concerned. Among other things, I am concerned about the propensity of the government to add to an already growing bureaucracy. That is precisely what this bill will do with the supply management concept. It will create a greater bureaucracy. It will restrict competition. It will prevent young people from entering the agricultural industry, and in my province where we are hoping to build up an agricultural industry, that is cause for concern. What is of even more concern is that the bill will eventually mean increases in food prices to the consumers. That is something which should be of concern to all members of the House.

While recognizing the need for improved marketing mechanisms at the primary producer level, in my view supply management as proposed in this bill is not the answer. Supply management will only create quotas on a

[Mr. McBride.]

national basis and as a result these quotas will ignore the need for competition because those who have them will have an economic advantage. The result will be a monopoly that will greatly affect the over-all efficiency of agriculture. Not only am I concerned about the prospect of a growing bureaucracy; I am also concerned because the bill violates the letter and the spirit of the BNA Act. I intend to state arguments to prove that fact. Section 121 of the BNA Act provides:

All articles of the growth, produce, or manufacture of any one of the provinces shall, from and after the Union, be admitted free into each of the other provinces.

This is one of the fundamental aspects of confederation; it is the sheet anchor of confederation. If confederation is to mean anything in this country, it has to mean a common market for all Canadians. Without this very important provision of the BNA Act Canada would not be a country as we know it. Instead, it would be an association of balkanized states. That is one of the things which this bill will bring into being. Clause 31 of the bill, which deals with federal-provincial agreements on marketing agencies, will provide an opting-out formula for the provinces. There is already an indication that Newfoundland will not be a party to such an agreement.

We have an egg marketing board in Newfoundland. Although we may be agriculturally deficient in most areas, we do produce a surplus of eggs. One of the reasons we produce a surplus of eggs is that we have large egg producers. One of the largest producers of eggs is the present caretaker Premier of Newfoundland, and someone suggests that there are a few rotten eggs in that basket. I would like to ask the minister, what will be the legal position of an egg marketing board in Newfoundland, which has already been declared ultra vires of the constitution by the Supreme Court of Canada, if this clause of the bill comes into effect? Under clause 31, if the province of Newfoundland decides to opt out or stay in, does that mean that it is still denied access to the greater Canadian market in the area of egg production? That is precisely what it means. It means that this bill will not protect the people of Newfoundland from the illegal egg cartel which exists in the province today.

• (1:40 a.m.)

I remember directing questions to the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Olson) in this House regarding the legality of the egg marketing board and he answered, "Why doesn't the hon. member encourage his colleagues to pass Bill C-176?" Now I find that at this late hour we are going to pass Bill C-176 with that escape clause, because that is what clause 31 is: it is an escape clause which will permit provinces such as Newfoundland to violate the constitution of this country with illegal marketing boards which will deny our people access to the greater Canadian markets. It is outright violation of our constitutional rights as a province of Canada. What will be the effect of that, Mr. Speaker?

I do not expect to touch the hearts of hon. members opposite because if I did this bill would not be going out of here in its present form. The province of Newfoundland has the unique distinction of having the highest per capita cost of living in the country and the lowest per capita income. It means that the people of Newfoundland will