

Farm Products Marketing Agencies Bill

able to make some political hay because, they have stated, they have found a small weakness in the bill. I think everyone, including myself, has suggested that there is a weakness.

An hon. Member: What is the weakness?

Mr. Muir (Lisgar): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, would the hon. member permit a question? The hon. member seemed to suggest that the Ontario broiler interests did not want producer representation on the board. May I ask him to name those he has been talking to?

Mr. Pringle: I am sorry. Would the hon. member mind repeating his question?

Mr. Muir (Lisgar): The hon. member seemed to imply that the Ontario broiler producers did not want producer representation on the council. Who gave him that information?

Mr. Pringle: I will be happy to answer that question. I inferred the opposite. On May 25, 26 and 27, the people most concerned with the broiler industry of Ontario will be meeting in the Chateau Laurier, and they will be happy to see the hon. member there and tell him what the producers of Ontario want. And they are not all integrators. Probably less than 20 per cent of the broilers are produced under vertical integration, not more.

● (9:30 p.m.)

I apologize to hon. members if I am slightly hot under the collar. The reason is that the producers I happen to know, need this bill. The producers want this bill. They want to appear before the Standing Committee on Agriculture and provide some input for two or three required minor amendments that need to be made. I agree that in the structure of the bill there is not sufficient law, if you like, written in to protect the producers.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Pringle: But as a member who has had considerable experience with enabling legislation during the past 10 years, I say that the regulations provided for each commodity are the important part of any marketing legislation, and that the structure of the Omnibus bill should be as flexible as possible. The bill does not tie the producers, who want to make decisions in their own way. Neither is there anything new about the bill. This is merely a bill to co-ordinate the marketing agencies of Canada that are already in operation. To this

[Mr. Pringle.]

extent, most of what hon. members on the opposition side of the House have said is irrelevant, because we are talking about marketing boards already formed and in operation—I might say operating very successfully—which need this legislation.

I could go on and kick this political football back to the opposition side of the House so that they could kick it back to the government side again, but I will not do so. I want to plead with the members of the opposition, on behalf of producers in the various commodity groups who are now competing against each other and providing the people of Canada with the best food they can get at very low prices. The suggested amendment, which consists of one sentence, is impossible to accept, though I am sure the idea behind it is well meant and I give the hon. member for Crowfoot credit for that. But I could not support an amendment of that kind. When we get into committee on the bill I shall look forward to assistance from the hon. member for Crowfoot—the committee might also get some help from a wheat farmer from Assiniboia as well—in drafting suitable amendments.

The Minister of Agriculture when speaking the other night said, as reported at page 7001 of *Hansard*:

I am prepared to work with the House and the committee to improve this bill. I wish to indicate now that some amendments which are being considered will help clarify some of the points raised by hon. members opposite.

I ask the opposition, what more do they want? I realize that my hon. friends have been grasping at little things to enable them to raise a lot of ruckus and they feel, mistakenly, that they are supporting the Canadian farmers. Let me tell them they are going to get a great surprise when they realize that what they have been doing is the very opposite. I have found hon. members opposite very co-operative in committee, and I think government members are as well. We are not perfect in committee, but we are a long way from being imperfect. We have the wherewithal and the know-how to listen to the producers who are now standing in line to come to Ottawa to appear before the committee, or anyone who wishes to listen to them, to state what they feel about this bill. They will ask for very few changes. But as producers they want the right to provide that input which is presently being denied them by members of the opposition.