

Government Orders

Mr. Jim Jordan (Leeds—Grenville): Mr. Speaker, I am not sure if my comments are going to conflict with the visit from the Senate or not. If they do, I hope you will give me the balance of my time.

I am pleased to take this opportunity to speak in reference to one of Canada's primary industries, that of agriculture. I want to zero in specifically on this bill and perhaps do it from a slightly different angle than what we have been hearing. As you know the bill will become part of the APCA—and most farmers know what that means—in addition to the Prairie Grain Advance Payments Act.

I am particularly interested in the effect of the changes that this bill will impose on the industry and the fallout that it might have on the economy of the country. I am hearing great wails these days from the implement manufacturers and the implement distributors. There is just no business there these days, they tell me, because of the great uncertainties that exist in the industry.

The main purpose of the APCA was nothing more than a method of encouraging orderly marketing of goods. That staple arrangement was a good one. It is an excellent one. Most farmers appreciated it. The marketing program that we have now in place without any amendments has been very successful. It has put some order into the marketing of crops to the benefit of everyone.

If a producer can afford to put his crop on the market over a period of time, and that is what this bill would allow him to do if it is not changed, he can be assured of a better price. It is as simple as that. It is an old story. When there is a glut of produce on the market at harvest time the price goes down, naturally. But if the producer can store his product, keep it for a while, he can normally show, under normal conditions, a much better return on his investment. The present arrangement is a good one. It is an excellent arrangement.

It is not only good for the producer at harvest time; it is a good arrangement for consumers. It assures the consumer of a good supply of quality food year round. That is what it provides for.

• (1650)

I see some similarity in the way of orderly marketing that this provided for and the effect that it has on stabilizing the market with milk marketing boards. I think there is a tremendous similarity there. I just want to expand on that a bit.

The same good effects are realized with an orderly system of marketing dairy products. It supplies the consumer with an excellent source of supply year round at a good price.

I do not think anyone is determined to put the farmer out of business, even those on the other side of the House, but I really wonder sometimes if they have an appreciation of the dilemma that is starting to set in, in the industry, a dilemma brought about recently with a couple of decisions which they have been alluded to from all directions here this afternoon.

I will talk about those two recent decisions just for a second or two. Then I want to pursue, if I may, how I see the need to stabilize the agricultural industry and develop briefly the good effect that stabilization has on any industry, whether it be milk or produce of other grain or corn. A stable industry is the best industry for all concerned—the producer, the consumer and the processor.

The supply management marketing system which I think is under some degree of threat right now—and I know dairy farmers agree with me on that one—in the dairy industry like the APCA is just another way, a proven way, and the best way for all concerned. Again the supplier, consumer and processor—everybody was happy with that controlled marketing system. It was the envy of the world.

Let us examine, just for a minute—and I can remember these days—the system that existed in the dairy industry before we had an organized marketing board. Anyone who was ever close to a farm 35 or 40 years ago will have to agree with what I am going to say. You can recall perhaps the flow of milk hitting the market varied. It depended on many factors. Many of those factors were out of the control of the individual farmer. It depended on the season. It depended on the feed. It depended on the weather. Many things could affect the supply of milk that was on the market on a given day or in a given week. It was a terribly unsettling situation for anyone who wanted to make a career out of farming. It was just too risky.

Most of the factors that I have mentioned affecting supply were beyond the control of the individual farmer. Somebody had to come in. Somebody had to impose some system on it to put some order into it, or no one would stay in the industry.