

Farm Products Marketing Agencies Bill

Mr. Moore: I mentioned earlier that there is no guarantee that the official appointed by the government to act on the proposed National Farm Products Marketing Council will represent all areas of production, geographically or otherwise. To illustrate this, I understand that recently the official from western Canada resigned from the Dairy Commission. Has his place been filled by another man from western Canada? Western Canada is a pretty big area. I will answer that question: It has not. This only adds to my suspicions, shared by many western farmers, that this government is not too interested in the problems of agriculture in general and in western Canada in particular. Can we be blamed for being concerned when the officers of the marketing council are to be appointed by the government?

What are some of the results of this rigid state control by the Dairy Commission? I do not think this sort of control can be called anything else. First of all, the producers are receiving little more for their product, in the face of rising costs. Some are receiving less. Many have been forced out of business. In addition, it is virtually impossible for a young dairy farmer to become established at the present time. The fluid milk shipper, especially those with small operations, is worried about his future, and he has cause to be.

● (8:30 p.m.)

○ The consumer is paying more than ever before. In other words, there are more problems than ever before and nothing has been solved. We might ask the many members of this House who have a dairy industry in their constituencies about the number of letters and calls for help they have been receiving. An illustration of the type of assistance we can expect is contained in the statement made by the minister concerning what the farmer could do with the \$2 milk which would result after a fine of \$1.25 per hundredweight had been levied.

There is no suggestion that it should be fed to school children, needy families or even all consumers. No, the \$2 milk is to be fed to calves and \$4.85 per hundredweight will be realized for the milk. Remember that the minister is speaking about the dairy industry and dairy cows. Most dairy cows in good herds today—and we are talking about good herds because we are talking about fluid milk shippers—produce about 100 or more pounds a day when they freshen because of the advances in breeding and genetics. One hun-

[Mr. Moore.]

dred pounds of milk today will not feed only one calf; it will feed at least five calves. We are talking only about male calves. I am quite sure the minister is aware that one can count on 50 per cent of his calves being male calves and 50 per cent being heifer calves. No good dairyman will pour the milk into a heifer if she is to be a producer when she matures.

Therefore, what do we need? We need cows that have litters, I guess. I know from experience that before the dairy policy was enunciated, 104 dairy bull calves were sold in one afternoon at a little sale down in my constituency. By the way, these calves sold for an average of \$70 each. They were about three weeks old, because under the law in Alberta they cannot be sold at an earlier age by public auction. Shortly after the dairy policy was announced the price went up to \$1 a pound, and soon there were not any for sale; people became panicky and decided they should keep their calves since they would have the surplus milk. There certainly would not seem to be much thought behind this suggestion.

In conclusion I ask, is it not dangerous to place this particular control in the hands of a government-appointed body which can make up the rules as it goes along? The welfare of an industry, a basic industry, and in fact the very way of life of a great number of Canadians, is to be placed in the hands of a few bureaucrats.

Mr. Rod Thomson (Battleford-Kindersley):

Mr. Speaker, as a farmer I am naturally quite interested in legislation of this type. During most of my life as a farmer I have been involved with the problem of surpluses and low prices. Sometimes these low prices were not necessarily a result of a surplus but, rather, because farmers did not have the power to ask for the prices for their products to which they were entitled. As a consequence, when legislation of this nature is being discussed I have more than a normal amount of interest in it.

Sometimes people who do not understand the problems of farmers and the marketing position of farmers, and who do not understand the situation in respect of the low prices farmers receive for their products and the high cost of farming these days, suggest that farmers are a little like purple people eaters and ask what is the matter out on the farm.

I should like to suggest one reason is the poor bargaining power and consequently