

*Agricultural Stabilization Act*

production. Recently the border was closed to the importation of United States eggs. Very few people in Canada are aware of the fact that we export to the United States, on average over a long period, three times as many eggs as we import. By closing off this importation we are not only closing off our ability to export three times as many eggs as we import, but we are reducing our productive ability in respect of our capacity to consume. That, to me, is an example of an inward-looking philosophy.

The poultry industry has tried supply-management. I suppose it is thought in some parts of Canada that supply-management will work in the hog industry. Many people in central Canada believe we should control hog production and have an effective supply-management program. I refer to central Canada because it is my belief, since western Canada exports some of its produce to the United States and Japan whenever possible, that it is not encouraged to adopt the idea of supply-management. Although I was not present at the hearings of the committee, I was surprised to read the evidence presented when representatives of the Canadian Pork Council appeared before the committee. The president of the Canadian Pork Council, Mr. Réginald Coutu, said in his opening remarks as recorded at page 4 of committee proceedings No. 29:

We have supported stop-loss at the level which I will give support to the industry—

In other words, the representatives of the Canadian Pork Council are saying that stabilization is fine so long as it is a stop-loss program. Every member of this House agrees with that concept. That was the basic concept when the stabilization act came into being back in 1959. It seems to me that this bill adopts the concept that the minister may apply supply-management. I wish to read a little further from Mr. Coutu's remarks with regard to supply-management. He said:

We have supported stop-loss at the level which will give support to the industry and which will not require supply control.

In the same proceedings, as recorded at page 6, Mr. Coutu said:

Okay. The five-year average of the price that we received today must be around \$38. I am not satisfied with 90 per cent of that. Does that answer your question?

He was replying to a question by the hon. member for Kent-Essex (Mr. Daudlin) who was a member of the committee. This points out very vividly that the hog industry is not particularly prepared to accept supply-management. When this bill was before the committee I asked the Minister of Agriculture whether he had in mind some kind of single-desk marketing system for the hog industry. He replied that he had. A single-desk marketing system is a very nice way of saying, "Leave it to us; we will manage the market and we will legislate the supply." If I were in the selling business I think I would be a pretty good salesman, but I am not confident that I could supply everything.

**An hon. Member:** What about vacuum cleaners?

**Mr. Horner:** I do not care whether it is vacuum cleaners or whatever; I believe three salesmen are better than one. I am not particularly enthusiastic about the idea of a single hog marketing agency. It could be said that it would curtail competition by the prairie provinces, Manitoba,

[Mr. Horner.]

Saskatchewan and Alberta which are entering into a contract with the Japanese in respect of the hog industry. I do not know whether a single marketing desk would curtail that competition. Would it sell more at a higher price? I do not believe it would.

Agencies and boards set up by the federal government have a tendency to become stale. They become tools of governments, and governments become stale. That is why in a democracy we have elections every four years, to invigorate, if nothing else, the government and the cabinet by changing them around. The old theory that a new broom sweeps clean sometimes applies to governments in a democracy. Boards are part of a stale system, and a single marketing desk will not improve sales.

Supply management will do two things: it will shrink the market, and increase the price to the consumer. I am surprised that the consumer organizations across Canada have not let out a great hue and cry and have not taken the minister to task. There is an article in this morning's *Globe and Mail* which deals with this question. As I say, I am surprised that the minister has not been taken to task for having caused the price of eggs to increase by 15 cents a dozen by a stroke of the pen. I can remember going to the chicken coop and gathering eggs when they were worth one cent a piece. That was a long time ago. The minister has increased the price of an egg by more than one cent with a stroke of the pen.

It might be said that the system will work. I think in a free, competitive society, where the market place has in fact a part to play, the cheapest way to bring about price stability is through the play of the marketplace and the prices quoted there. I hear my NDP friends saying, "Oh, my God". I said that also when I watched their convention on TV. I brought my three sons, who want to become engaged in agriculture, to watch the program. I said they should look at that convention because it would give them an indication why I remain in politics. My sons watched, listened, and shared my concern.

● (1220)

**Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** They will get over that when they grow up.

**Mr. Horner:** I do not know when some people will grow up. My eldest son is 24 and I think he is relatively mature. He is 6 feet 4½ inches, so I think he is tall enough.

Getting back to the bill, supply-management increases the price to the consumer and shrinks the market for the producer. That is the old story of the NDP and the CCF. They wanted to get rid of the middleman and lower the price to the consumer. CEMA has removed some middlemen, and some producers too; but has it lowered the price to the consumer? The middleman has become government. Government is the biggest middleman in every industry today. I would like to see a limited amount of government involvement in the agricultural industry because I believe government is a curse as a middleman. Once it becomes a middleman it is impossible to remove. Who can remove government once it invades the manufacturing field or any industry? Government grows, it never shrinks. Middlemen sometimes go broke and out of business. Competition forces this. But governments go on forever, they grow