

Farm Products Marketing Agencies Bill

Mr. Allen B. Sulatycky (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, from the concluding remarks of the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) I take it that the next hour would be unproductive if we proceeded with private members' business. Therefore I will consent to that hour being used for the consideration of government orders.

Mr. Howard (Skeena): You never know. Perhaps the hon. member should try.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel): Order, please. Am I to conclude that there is unanimous consent to forgo private members' hour?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel): The hon. member for Timiskaming.

Mr. Peters: Mr. Speaker, I presume that the source of the statement the minister made was the statement on the development of Canadian agriculture, submitted by the provincial ministers of agriculture to "Hon. H. A. Olson", on November 22, 1971.

Mr. Olson: That is not it. The source is the communiqué from the provincial ministers of agriculture.

Mr. Peters: Yes. As I say, that was the source.

Mr. Olson: That was not the source the hon. member referred to.

Mr. Peters: I presume that the source is the communiqué I referred to. The general outline on page 11 begins by saying:

• (5:00 p.m.)

Bill C-176 in its present form is unacceptable to the provinces although the principle of orderly marketing and market sharing is acceptable to all.

The minister may give his interpretation of what he would like things to be, but he should also tell us what the facts are. We visited a number of the provinces and found that many of them were opposed to this type of legislation. Quebec, in particular, was opposed to it, on the same grounds as those on which I originally opposed the bill, and still am opposed to it. Quebec saw no reason why it should set up a multitude of boards. Why, it asked, should not the federal government set up the boards, and then Quebec participate?

This is enabling legislation intended to get Bill Stewart's 38 boards into operation in Ontario where he is in a heck of a lot of trouble. This does not mean I am opposed to marketing legislation. It only means that there is controversy in this field and that the minister is being less than honest if he does not present to the House the facts as they are. I suggest he owes the House an explanation.

Mr. Olson: On a question of privilege, Mr. Speaker. The hon. member for Timiskaming has not stated the fact in saying my point was based on the document from which he read. It was based on a communiqué issued at the conclusion of the agriculture ministers meeting, a document which I am prepared to read or to lay on the table again. I would refer the hon. member to the second para-

graph on page two, where it says there was agreement that the legislation was necessary to provide a legal framework for a co-ordinating agency, and that speedy passage of Bill C-176 should be secured.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Peters: There is no question that the ministers of agriculture agreed in accordance with the statement the minister has just read. They are well aware that there is a constitutional problem which means that enabling legislation must be passed to provide for the operation of all the networks of boards in all the provinces. This is what the minister just said. But it is not really what he said earlier. What he said earlier was that they had agreed to Bill C-176. There is no relationship between the statement made in the brief and the statement made in the communiqué.

I understand—I may be wrong—that the minister said the ministers of agriculture had agreed to Bill C-176. That is not the case, according to the document which I read.

I am not only taking the position outlined in this brief; I am well aware from firsthand knowledge, having listened to all the ministers of all the provinces several times on this subject, that there were grave misgivings about certain clauses of this bill. My interest is the reasoning behind the first part of this amendment before us. I see no legitimate reason why eggs and poultry should have been accorded different treatment from the other commodities. We are all now familiar with the special arrangements under which producers have a right to vote. But under this proposal we would be eliminating the right of plebiscite or determination—

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

Mr. Douglas Stewart (Okanagan-Kootenay): Mr. Speaker, since March 17, 1970, when the predecessor to Bill C-176 was first introduced to Parliament, right across Canada millions of words, hundreds of representations and dozens of amendments have been offered by farmers, farm organizations, political spokesmen, consumer interests and other concerned associations on this subject matter.

The Standing Committee on Agriculture has met and heard many producer groups here in Ottawa and has travelled the nation to seek and receive letters, briefs and other points of view on this intended farm products marketing agencies act. This process of discussion and debate has been long and lively, and those taking part have both supported and, in some instances, opposed the concept of establishing national marketing agencies.

As a member of the Agriculture Committee, I have had an opportunity to participate more fully than most in the deliberations on this proposed legislation. Although it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, for me at this point in time to offer original comment, I do wish to dwell briefly on two points which to me have become abundantly clear in my assessment of this bill. First, there is no doubt in my mind that a significant majority of Canadian farmers see a real need for a national and rational approach to marketing their products. They consider Bill C-176 in its proposed form to be the answer, and thus urge