

*Canadian Egg Marketing Agency*

[Translation]

**Mr. Adrien Lambert (Bellechasse):** Madam Speaker, I would like to contribute briefly to this debate to second the motion now before us and to make a few comments which I hope will help solve this serious problem. The motion says that the committee appointed will be responsible for examining in depth all the activities of the Canadian Egg Marketing Agency.

After the committee has done its work, I wonder if there will not be a suggestion to form another committee to examine the work of the committee responsible for examining the activities of the agency. This can go on forever.

Madam Speaker, I know that the problem of marketing farm products is extremely difficult to solve. I think it may even be one of the most difficult to solve, because so many people are involved in marketing farm products, so many people want to earn a living from marketing farm products that finally the prices go up, the consumers are dissatisfied with the prices they must pay, and the producers do not receive what they deserve. This is not a problem which has come up only in the last two or three years, it is an old problem but one which is always current.

It is interesting to note, however, that throughout the movement of these farm products across Canada, all efforts to put marketing in order has failed. I remember that when we discussed Bill C-176 establishing the National Marketing Council and creating marketing agencies, we examined very carefully all the aspects of the problem of farm product marketing. I must admit that the present Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Whelan) is making a real effort to communicate to the population the true situation by trying to make the consumers understand, or at least trying to make them understand, that the Canadian consumer is the one who spends the smallest proportion of his income on food.

I have just come back from a trip to Europe; living in some countries was quite a surprise and I noticed that the cost of living was extremely high and that food is the most expensive item for European consumers.

With the adoption of Bill C-176, Mr. Speaker, we thought we had found a tremendous solution, that we could hope that the Farm Products Marketing Council and the marketing agencies would manage to meet the needs of both consumers and producers by straightening out the marketing of farm produce. I feel the time has come for some authority to assert itself in Canada, because there is disorder, and where there is disorder, things do not go well.

In marketing, we have not yet managed to find ways of achieving the objectives we had set out for ourselves with the passing of Bill C-176. That is why I support the motion for the setting up of a committee to enable us to look into, seriously and as quickly as possible, all those problems and prepare an intelligent report, report which could for a change enable Parliament to pass strong legislation.

● (1640)

But I know already that as in the consideration of Bill C-176 we will be faced with the constitutional problem. It is a sad thing to see in our country how many problems

[Mr. Murta.]

remain unsolved because of the question of jurisdiction, the constitutional problem. At times we get the impression that there are borders between the provinces as there are between countries, that we do not speak the same language, that we do not live in the same country. If we wanted to make a serious effort a solution could be found which would bring to reason large multinational corporations which corner a market and control it in the most profitable way to them without any consideration for the needs of the consumers and the producers pushing for their rights.

When Bill C-176 was under consideration we suggested amendments to force importers of farm products to comply with the same rule of the game as Canadian producers with respect to marketing. Unfortunately, those amendments were not accepted and today, as in the past, the Department of Industry, Trade and Commerce is still issuing import permits, and not always after consulting the ministers, not even the Minister of Agriculture who is responsible in Canada for the quantity and the quality of the food we get.

During the summer American eggs arrived on the Canadian market when we already had difficulties marketing our own production. Producers were offended by that procedure, and that automatically led to the destruction by the Farm Products Marketing Board of a considerable number of eggs. For my part, I am not shocked by that in view of the present system but, on the other hand, I am terrified by the fact that food is being destroyed when in our country there are families that do not have enough food to meet their needs. The situation is quite deplorable in that respect and I think it should be looked into seriously to see what is going on in that area.

Mr. Speaker, there is in Canada a board called the Food Prices Review Board. According to press reports, this board has spent up to now over \$3 million and for what? What have been the results? The chairman of that board, Mrs. Plumtre, with the assistance of her officials has published quite interesting reports to show some deficiencies in marketing, and deplore that prices are rising in such or such an area.

However, since the board unfortunately does not have the necessary powers and has been unable to provide solutions to correct the situation, it is probably why the Minister of Agriculture once rightly and rather severely criticized the chairman of the board, a criticism which I endorse because I think it was necessary that a responsible minister of the Crown take position and say to the country that the board does not give the anticipated results. I read in the Speech from the Throne that the government intends to introduce legislation extending the terms of reference of that board. Mr. Speaker, I feel that consumers should be protected against speculation and even gangsterism in certain cases.

But, I would very much like to see that the board be given the necessary powers to provide punishment, and that it be done once and for all. This reminds me a little of the existing legislation on combines and coalitions. They resemble the statutes we see around Parliament hill, they serve no useful purpose. These laws have been passed by parliamentarians to deal severely against abuses committed by some companies that indulge in misleading adver-