

*Farm Products Marketing Agencies Bill*

I believe firmly that if there were legislative machinery whereby the provinces or commodity groups were encouraged to sit around a table to discuss their differences which are so real, so deep and almost impenetrable in some instances but which they could at least confront, we could at least make some progress. None of us, and certainly not myself, would disagree with the hon. member for Kent-Essex when he says that there will be mammoth problems in implementing this bill. I am sure the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Olson) would agree with him on that. Nobody has minimized the difficulties of governing this country or of establishing national schemes of any type. It is no different in agriculture. But surely the hon. member for Kent-Essex would have to recognize that if we took the logic of his argument one step further than he took it, one would have to argue against such institutions as the Canadian Wheat Board because one would have to say that any attempt to plan or to bring together producers is a hopeless endeavour in the first place. But even he agrees that the Canadian Wheat Board is of vital importance to grain farmers.

The other point that the hon. member made and which I thought was a very good one concerns imports. It seems to me that this bill will be a great aid in attempting to do something more about imports of agricultural products into Canada, because the producers of any commodity will have an opportunity for the first time in Canadian history, if they are smart enough to take advantage of it, to get together and come before the Minister of Agriculture and other officials of the government officially and say that they are speaking for the hog, or egg, or beef producers, as the case may be and the minister will know that that is correct. They do speak for a commodity.

The problem in agriculture is that farmers have always been divided amongst themselves and while one group was working for one goal, another group was working for another and often opposite goal. So this bill will also encourage the hammering out of differences within the agricultural community. Producers will then speak with one voice. I ask the hon. member for Kent-Essex whether he does not think that any minister—and let us for a moment not be partisan or political about this—to whom representation is made by a commodity group would find that the fact that they are speaking with one voice would bring far better results than any representations that could be made in any other way. I think that one of the best things that could happen in Canada, if we are to take seriously the threat to Canadian agriculture from imports into Canada, would be for every commodity group to set up an agency, for the purpose of dealing with the import of their commodities into the country, if for no other reason.

I have been convinced for a long time that this bill had within it plenty of guards to prevent anybody from being forced to do what they did not want to do. Therefore I have been somewhat critical of the Canadian Cattlemen's Association and of other organizations which in my view continually say to us that we are telling them lies, we are not telling them the truth when we say that they have an escape-hatch, that we are not in any way forcing them under this bill.

I will go one step further and say that I have resented that attitude on the part of that organization and I have

said so publicly both inside and outside the House. I have felt that their concerns were met, that they were provided for. Yet the organization has insisted that more should be done. But the main concern that I have had about this bill is that when you come to discuss the idea of whether you are going to have the big or the small producer, the big or the small farmer, the fact remains that in any collection of opinion or in any plebiscite that may be held, the small people, just like the poor people in any culture, will outnumber the rich, and the little farmers will outnumber the big farmers. So the vote will inevitably be more in favour of the small producer than of the large producer.

For that reason I cannot understand why members like the hon. member for Vegreville (Mr. Mazankowski), whom I respect as an individual though I do not always hold his opinions in high regard, keeps reiterating, as do others like him such as the hon. member for Battle River (Mr. Downey) who is just as bad on this point, that somehow this legislation will be hurting the small producers and helping the big producers—because he knows, or should know, that there are many more small producers of any commodity, if we get this legislation through soon and into effect before the situation which exists in Canada results in all small producers being obliterated, who could easily form the majority. And the majority which will be the smaller farmers will always control the decision. Therefore, this bill can greatly assist small farmers. Given that situation, I reiterate what I said on Tuesday, that there is nothing to fear in this legislation. The fact that certain organizations have continued, for political gain or other reason, to insist that somehow—

• (1:30 a.m.)

**Mr. Paproski:** Come off it.

**Mr. McBride:** The hon. member for Edmonton Centre (Mr. Paproski) may or may not know anything about dairy farming, when he condemns the Canadian Dairy Commission.

**Mr. Paproski:** Yes, I do. I know a hell of a lot more than you do. I know the difference between a cow and a bull—and all you are giving us is a bunch of bull!

**Mr. McBride:** We are certainly hearing some bull over there now. The fact remains that without the Canadian Dairy Commission the dairy industry would be in desperate straits today; for instance, in as bad a position as the egg industry and the hog industry were experiencing. I find it difficult to believe that people like the hon. member for Edmonton Centre can imply, by statements like the one he just made, that somehow the Canadian Dairy Commission, and going further, the Canadian Wheat Board, are not working for the benefit of Canadian agriculture. Just because you have some individuals who have a grievance against the institution, or against who the act is administered in a certain case, does not mean that in the overwhelming majority of cases it is not of benefit to the farmers.

**Mr. Paproski:** What has happened to butter?

**Mr. McBride:** Surely the hon. member ought to know that when you produce milk you get a lot more powdered milk from your production than you do butter, and if you