

Farm Products Marketing Agencies Bill

ry bodies. Much of that has been corrected by the members of the committee, including opposition members.

I wish to deal with the protection or lack of protection which it will or will not give to the producers. As the bill has been changed and amended, there are plenty of safeguards. It is abundantly clear that in the case of each product the majority of producers have to be in favour before an agency can be established. That is an important point. It is important because we were asked to accept certain exclusions that we did not accept. If there are no exclusions we must be sure that the producers of a given product who do not want to come under the act will not be forced to accept an agency. One of the shortcomings of the legislation is that it does not deal adequately with ensuring income to the producer. There are at least two amendments to come before the House which will deal with that question. This legislation should concern itself with income.

The basic approach of the provincial legislation both when it was established and throughout the years was that the provincial agencies would be bargaining agencies designed to achieve a fair, reasonable or adequate market price and income return for the producer. That is the basic approach. One of the failures in this bill is that there is no stated concern about farm income. By inference, this is left to the agricultural prices support legislation which we have on the books. With regard to many farm products, this is inadequate and is not administered effectively.

Hon. members have repeatedly asked why the prices support act is not used to assist farmers who are in considerable difficulty because of the present low prices for hogs and other farm products. If the Agricultural Prices Support Act is not going to be effectively used to protect the farm income position, we should consider ways and means of doing it through this bill.

The position of the provinces with regard to this bill is not one of total unanimity or of total disagreement. I know one province which changed its position while this bill was being considered. This was a public move. I do not know what has been said to the minister behind closed doors or what opinions have been privately expressed by the provinces. When this bill is passed, it will be permissive for the provinces and producers. Those provinces which in their wisdom do not choose to use it with regard to certain products will not have to do so. By the same token, if the producers of eggs, hogs, apples, potatoes or cattle consider that this type of legislation is not of use to them, they will not be required to use it.

If they consider that the marketing system which they have is adequate and they can live in the same manner as the producers of hogs in my province are attempting to do with \$19 hogs, it will be their right to do so. As free citizens of Canada, they will be able to continue in that manner because this bill will not force them to do anything else. We must keep this in mind.

I have reservations which can be dealt with by further amendments which we intend to move. We hope they will be considered and accepted by this House. They

[Mr. Gleave.]

would make the bill a more effective instrument and make it possible for farmers to use it more effectively. The first order of business of a Parliament should be to ensure that products move freely and have access to the markets across Canada. If that is done, this should be a workable instrument. There should not be any coercion. Farmers and producers should have the right to either use or not to use this legislation. They should have free access to the markets in Canada as well as those outside Canada. When marketing farm produce we should have available all the markets we can find. We should not approach the marketing of farm produce from a restrictive point of view but from an expansionary point of view.

Representatives of the Dairy Commission appeared before the standing committee yesterday. They were asked whether they were taking advantage of the present market for powdered milk which appears as though it might be expanded. In our agricultural production we should not have a policy which will box us into the Canadian market. After all, this country has only 20 million people. Our agencies, whether privately or publicly-owned, should provide an opportunity to expand into other markets so that we can use the available agricultural resources in terms of people, land, know-how and ability to produce. Our over-all policy should be one which is outward-looking.

It would be a mistake to consider this bill as a restrictive instrument. Our approach should be that this is an instrument which will enable us to more effectively market our products and exploit all markets that may be available to us both domestically and overseas.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Adrien Lambert (Bellechasse): Mr. Speaker, the bill under study, Bill C-176, supersedes Bill C-197 which having been discussed at length prior to the adjournment of the previous session, comes back to this House under a new form but with the same basic principles. It was then a highly controversial bill and some people were in favour of it while others were dead set against it, but all these points of view were from the producers or farm associations concerned.

During this session this bill has been discussed at some considerable length. The House asked the Committee on Agriculture to travel across the country and consult provincial agriculture ministers and hear the views of the various farm organizations.

I was really amazed at the continuing interest for all our sittings, be it in eastern, central or western Canada. I am convinced that each member of the Standing Committee on Agriculture worked very seriously. We all had the purpose of collecting information so as to be able to provide farmers with a helpful piece of legislation, while preserving the interest of consumers and agencies concerned with the trade of agricultural production.

At the same time, Mr. Speaker, at the provincial level, in Nova Scotia, for instance, the Minister of Agriculture expressed the views of his government in a very extensive brief. I could summarize the minister's attitude by