

Farm Products Marketing Agencies Bill

marketing board that the price of pork rose little in the years he chose in relation to the rise in the price of cattle. The hon. member failed to explain that the real reason for today's pork prices is a supply one resulting from surplus grain, and that the same situation exists in the United States where there is no pork producers marketing board.

Perhaps the best illustration is the Ontario flue-cured tobacco growers marketing board which originated in 1957. The board acts on behalf of all flue-cured tobacco growers in Ontario to market and control supply. It sets production quotas each year which is a type of supply management. The board sits down with the trade and establishes how much product is needed and allocates the acreage required to produce that amount of product. On the whole, the system has worked well, has protected the small farmer and ensured his survival. Without such controlled marketing, the small tobacco farmer would have been swallowed up and would have disappeared.

The hon. member for Timiskaming (Mr. Peters) should have examined the record of this board before making such bold assertions in this House on Tuesday as "good-bye to the family farm" and also that "we are not interested in eliminating the family farms in Canada". So too might the hon. member for Vegreville (Mr. Mazankowski) have re-examined the statements he made such as the following:

—this bill will strangle the opportunity of young people and old who wish to engage in the business of agricultural production—
—the government's answer to this is simply to help the big operators get bigger and to heck with the small fellow.

The Ontario flue-cured tobacco grower's marketing board is effective because all Ontario flue-cured tobacco is controlled and marketed by the board. It has been extremely successful when compared to commodities which are not regulated by marketing boards. The board is even more effective because 95 per cent of Canada's tobacco is grown in Ontario. If this were not so, a national marketing scheme with supply management to stabilize prices paid to the producers would be necessary.

This is well illustrated by the recent situation with broiler chickens. When the total Canadian market was over-supplied prices fell to loss levels. As a result of this experience broiler producers across Canada are now negotiating to establish market sharing agreements among the provinces. Not all commodities are as fortunate as tobacco in having almost all its product concentrated in one area. In the case of tobacco the provincial marketing board is sufficient to do the job. In other cases, with crops grown throughout the nation, national marketing legislation is necessary because the authority of a provincial board extends only within the province.

Since the Ontario flue-cured tobacco growers marketing board was established there have been great advances in the technology of growing tobacco. Yields per acre have more than doubled, from 1,100 pounds per acre to 2,400 pounds per acre, and the necessity to run a two-year crop rotation has disappeared. It is now possible to grow tobacco continuously on the same land. It was inevitable, therefore, in this situation, with a fairly constant market demand, that acreage allotment would have to be reduced. The important point, however, is not the acreage allotment, but the total amount of tobacco sold off each farm and the price received for this tobacco, for this

determines the farmer's income. The premise of the hon. member for Lambton-Kent that a cut in acreage somehow establishes the failure of the board is incorrect and his conclusion does not apply.

I cannot agree that Bill C-176 should be amended so that a group wishing to come under national marketing legislation would have to wait until a bill is passed in this House. With all due respect to this House, our parliamentary procedure is such that a group might have to wait a very long time for such legislation to be passed, particularly if this bill is any example. I do not want the producers of this country to go through a procedure like this every time they want to become part of a national marketing program. If the commodities are set out in the bill, Parliament cannot be blamed for holding up the farmers' demands.

As I have already pointed out, marketing plans in Ontario have been very effective in regulating the marketing of farm products within Ontario. A national marketing act is essential to enable a similar system of farm marketing to operate successfully in interprovincial trade. It is plain that today there is less chance for the survival of the rugged individual. The purpose of this bill is to provide the machinery for the farmer to regulate his own industry through the medium of national marketing if he so desires. Bill C-176 will not obstruct the free flow of goods across this country: it will give every farmer an equal opportunity to get the price that the market can supply, and a better chance to sell his product at a price which will bring him a reasonable return.

• (12:10 a.m.)

Mr. Arnold Peters (Timiskaming): It is often the case in Parliament, not only with regard to agriculture but in many other fields, that there is considerable delay between the time when something is necessary, desirable and useful to a segment of the population and the time when legislation is brought forward. This delay often creates a considerable dilemma for those who are committed to a particular philosophy.

Those of us who were in the CCF and are now in the NDP have been always committed to the idea of national marketing legislation. We have also been committed to two or three other fairly basic philosophies, one of which is that the central government should be as strong as possible and that if necessary we should push the provincial authorities in all fields. In fact, a socialist government means a fairly high degree of centralization. Most of the members of the CCF who came from a rural background in the early days were committed to what they considered to be the family farm unit and the free enterprise system which existed within that unit.

Most of the complaints that have been made about this legislation are all true. It is too broad, it is not specific enough, and it allows intervention by the provinces, government agencies and all kinds of civil service bodies before it reaches down to the producers. If we had had this bill 20 years ago we would be talking in my area about something like 2,000 farmers. It is true that it is not a large area, but there were 2,000 farmers who were able to make a living off the land and live in that rural economy.