

Farm Products Marketing Agencies Bill

the situation that has developed. I am surprised that the minister, at this late date, should mount such a vehement attack—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. I regret to interrupt the hon. member. There are only a few minutes left for dealing with the substance of the subamendment proposed by the hon. member for Swift Current-Maple Creek. If there are other points of order to be raised, I will hear them. I suggest that the hon. member should not argue the substance of the subamendment until the Chair has put it to the House.

Mr. Peters: Mr. Speaker, I thought you had put it to the House.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: With respect, the Chair has not yet put it. The Chair was inviting hon. members to make their comments as to the procedural acceptability of the proposed subamendment. If there are no other comments I will put the subamendment. The hon. member for Swift Current-Maple Creek, seconded by the hon. member for Battle River (Mr. Downey) moves:

That the amendment be amended by adding thereto, immediately following the word "product" at the end thereof, the words "but, for the purpose of any of the provisions of this act, shall not include cattle or calves;"

Mr. Peters: Mr. Speaker, I wish to speak to the amendment. I am surprised that the minister has been able to add a new dimension to the debate on this bill by remarks of such force and vindictiveness which have been aimed at members of this House who have been seized of this bill for a long time and have made a considerable contribution to the bill. It should be remembered that initially producers were not even considered when the government thought of establishing marketing boards. The valuable changes contained in the bill have been brought about by members of this House.

The amendment introduced by the President of the Privy Council (Mr. MacEachen) is different only in that eggs and poultry and products of eggs and poultry are not included in the general provisions of the bill. That means that the producers of those commodities do not need to hold a plebiscite before the establishment of a board governing them.

In other words, this government is trying to establish such boards without giving to the producers concerned any of the protection that is available to any other producers who may wish to establish boards governing their commodities. We support the amendment, just as we supported the original clause, because all agricultural products and derivatives thereof are to be included, with the exceptions I have just mentioned. We have always been in favour of that, just as we have always been in favour of the protection which is to be given to producers.

Although the amendment does not spell this out, the farmers in a province must vote on whether they want a marketing agency and, before a nationwide agency is set up, the farmers collectively in the country in favour of such agency must be in the majority. Each province has taken steps for determining whether the majority of farmers producing any commodity are in favour of establishing a board and, eventually, an agency that will operate on a national basis. In this case the government is flying

[Mr. Peters.]

in the face of what is happening in Ontario. The minister was only partly right in saying that egg and poultry farmers in Ontario want a national board before they will vote for a provincial board. I suggest that is not correct and the minister knows that is not correct.

The minister is well aware that considerable time has elapsed since the government first asked farmers whether they wanted an egg marketing board. That happened a long time ago. At that time I do not think the farmers were in the least interested in such a board. Ontario egg producers were not interested in what happened in the rest of Canada because, at that time, Ontario was not much more than self-sufficient. It is only recently, when Ontario has been supplying the bulk of eggs in eastern Ontario, and particularly in Quebec, that this has become a major problem.

I am surprised that the minister who agreed in committee that protections were necessary should come before the House and support an amendment which eliminates the right of egg producers to determine whether or not a national agency shall represent them. The provisions of the clause we are considering, and of clause 18, will be put into effect without instructions for setting up an agency coming from the farmers themselves. In other words, the government will be establishing a national egg and poultry marketing agency. I think the minister was considerably less than correct when he suggested that all the ministers of agriculture of the provinces are in favour of the bill. The communiqué they put out said that they were in favour of this bill only if a number of amendments were made to it.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Peters: They suggested amendments, and the minister knows that. The minister has been dishonest about their position on a number of occasions.

Mr. Horner: He has misled the House.

Mr. Peters: That shocks me. The minister did not need to say that to get this bill through. He did not need to be dishonest. He ought to be willing to indicate forthrightly what the actual situation is.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel): Order, please. It being five o'clock, p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of private members' business as listed in today's order paper, namely, private bills, notices of motions (papers) and public bills.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I wonder if the House might not wish to suspend private members' hour. There is only so much time left to finish discussion of the report stage of Bill C-176. Many amendments are to be dealt with and many members wish to speak.

On the other hand, I think I can say that if private members' hour is taken up with considering the private bill that is at the top of the list, there may be considerable debate on it. I think, all told, it might be better if we were to forgo private members' hour and use the time for the further consideration of Bill C-176.