

Farm Products Marketing Agencies Bill

This is not the case.

On the contrary, as farmers develop profitable farms, rural towns and villages will be rejuvenated.

That, Mr. Speaker, I repeat is the policy of this government. It is the only possible policy that could attract people like myself and the hon. member for Richelieu (Mr. Côté) as well as others who represent in part or in whole rural constituencies. Anything less would be unacceptable to us, just as it would be unacceptable to spokesmen across the way.

Mr. McIntosh: What did the Minister of Manpower and Immigration say? Get to the point.

Mr. Faulkner: I will cover many points if hon. members will just be patient. I am trying to deal with the points which have been raised. I was also disappointed because of a statement made by an hon. member for whom I have great respect, the hon. member for Meadow Lake. Perhaps his comment was made in the heat of the moment. He indicated, as recorded at page 10800 of *Hansard*, that somehow this bill was being foisted on western farmers by Quebec farmers.

Mr. McIntosh: That is correct.

Mr. Faulkner: I am prepared to give the hon. member the benefit of the doubt.

Mr. McIntosh: That is correct.

Mr. Faulkner: I see the hon. member for Meadow Lake opposite. I suspect he did not intend to say that. He indicates that my assumption is correct, by nodding his head. He did not intend that at all. I accept that. The hon. member so indicates by nodding his head, although the hon. member for Swift Current-Maple Creek would deny that. He would like to indicate that the hon. member intended it. I want to make clear that a substantial number of farmers from outside Quebec support this bill. I received on May 10 a letter from Mr. Gordon Hill, president of the Ontario Federation of Agriculture. In it he said that many farmers of Ontario support Bill C-176.

Mr. McIntosh: Tell us what the Minister of Agriculture of Quebec said.

Mr. Faulkner: I do not think it is necessary to do that. Hon. members from the west have quoted editorials from the *Western Producer* which support Bill C-176. I wish to read what Gordon Hill, president of the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, said about Bill C-176:

The Ontario Federation of Agriculture, representing approximately 75,000 farmers—

That is not an inconsiderable number.

—continues to strongly support Bill C-176.

We believe the bill will provide farmers with means to extend existing provincial marketing plans to the national level. We see this as necessary for farmers to improve their incomes.

We appreciate the firm stand taken by the Minister of Agriculture, the Honourable H. A. Olson. We find him to be a man of high calibre and integrity—

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

• (5:30 p.m.)

Mr. Faulkner: This is not something from a loyal backbencher; I am simply quoting the remarks of Mr. Gordon

Hill. It becomes progressively more interesting as we get into it. I repeat these words:

We find him to be a man of high calibre and integrity, working hard to improve the economic opportunities for Canadian farmers. We will continue to inform our members and member organizations of his dedication on our behalf.

We trust you will continue to support the Minister of Agriculture in his efforts to have Bill C-176 passed into law as soon as possible.

The point I am trying to make is a simple and straightforward one. It has nothing to do with Quebec farmers foisting something on us. I am glad the hon. member for Meadow Lake indicated by a nod that that is not what he intended to suggest. Ontario farmers are behind this bill as well.

There was a third contribution which, thank God, was the briefest contribution yesterday. It came from my friend and neighbour in Ontario, the hon. member for Prince Edward-Hastings (Mr. Hees). I would suggest that he has not read this bill very carefully, because when one reads his remarks one is not very impressed with his grasp of the bill. He disappointed me because he perpetuated the old myth and red herring which we on this side of the House have been trying vainly and laboriously to eradicate from the minds of the farmers, that is, that somehow the marketing plan in this bill will be foisted on them by the government. No hon. member, no matter how bitterly he opposes this bill, can honestly say that that is what is in this bill. There are many sections which allow producers to have a say in this scheme.

I think it was a little less than honest for the hon. member for Prince Edward-Hastings—granted that he had not read the bill and therefore was confused, but assuming he knew what he was saying—to have said what he said. It was simply to misinform the farmers on important points which we have attempted for some time to make clear. These are some of the things which disappointed me. One reason I wanted to rise today was to try in some small measure to clarify the record.

Today we had an interesting speech, as we usually do, from the hon. member for Lambton-Kent (Mr. McCutcheon) but, frankly, what he said was that marketing boards were not the final panacea for agriculture. I do not know whether that came as a surprise to his colleagues or whether some of his colleagues feel that some of us on this side of the House think that with Bill C-176 the problems of agriculture are finished. Lest anyone holds that view, let us clear up the matter immediately. No one on this side of the House has said that Bill C-176 is the panacea for agriculture. Anyone who argues that does not know what he is talking about. However, there is a world of difference between recognizing the limitations of this bill and going into a general indictment of marketing in general.

This is where I part company with the hon. member for Lambton-Kent. I think he pointed out some of the defects in marketing boards. Everyone recognizes that some are more effective than others and work more effectively for producers than others. That is a truism, but it does not dismiss the desirability of having marketing boards. I think the hon. member for Essex (Mr. Whelan) excellently pointed out some of the strengths of marketing boards. It is on that point that we on this side of the House rest our case. We can provide the legislation, and it is up to the farmers to make it work. The dairy producers and the