

Egg Marketing Committee Report

among Canadians. We make everything we can so that legislation be efficient, that westerners and easterners be able to live from their work. This is our only aim: Be able to survive, to have incomes related to the efforts we make to produce such or such a thing. Do not ask me to grow wheat on my farm, the soil is not good for it, but ask me to produce butter or milk and I shall tell you yes, but give me the possibility to make enough profits to earn my family's living. The Western wheat producer asks exactly the same thing.

Why should we bother with legislation, regulations and all kinds of mechanisms that are bothering everybody. When we could get through and go straight to the point. What is our goal, Mr. Speaker? We want to be able to distribute throughout Canada those quality goods produced by Canadians for Canadians in sufficient quantities. If we achieve that in the Parliament of Canada, why would any agency throw a spanner in the works, spoil that labour? We really could meet that objective so that eventually, throughout Canada, from Vancouver to Newfoundland, there might be some butter on every table. Whether that butter is produced in Quebec, in New Brunswick or in Ontario is irrelevant provided it reaches its destination.

If farmers need grain to process it into pork products, dairy products, or eggs, the agencies and producers must be able to rely on regular supplies to carry on such processing and then put that product unto public markets, according to some orderly organization, some appropriate mechanism—which I expected to find in Bill C-176. I as a Canadian would not wish this failure of the egg marketing concept to act as a deterrent for other producers. But all of us should roll up our sleeves and make a reasonable effort to try and cope with this situation.

If the Act has to be amended, let it be amended; if restraints have to be imposed, let them be imposed, but let something be done before it is too late, because every Canadian is watching this Parliament, watching everything we do, everything we shall decide, everything we shall do. Shall we accept to be paralysed because of the temporary failure of an agency called CEMA, or shall we go ahead and provide the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Whelan) with additional powers? Any mistake we might make could not be worse than any past one, and could be termed another failure. But I do not think we will make a mistake if we act in that way and use the necessary means to achieve that goal.

What is the goal? It is better distribution throughout Canada of food products at prices tailored to the consumer's ability to pay and bringing farm producers enough revenue to allow them to live decently. That is all we are asking for, nothing more. I cannot understand why, in 1975, 264 members of parliament should fail to solve that problem. No need to wait a hundred years to do something. The time has come. Let us do everything we can and Canadians will be most grateful.

● (2030)

[English]

Mr. Cafik: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, I think you will find there is general agreement in the House to limit speeches to 15 minutes for the balance of the debate tonight in order to give members of all parties an opportu-

[Mr. Lambert (Bellechasse).]

nity to participate. The Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Whelan) will be speaking, and he has indicated to me that he was not prepared for this and may want an extra two or three minutes. I think there would be agreement to that.

Mr. MacLean: Mr. Speaker, we concur in the suggestion and I commend the hon. member for making it on the basis, of course, that the minister will not go excessively over 15 minutes.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): We agree, Mr. Speaker—15 minutes for ordinary mortals, and 17 for the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Whelan).

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. Hon. members have heard the suggestion of the hon. member for Ontario (Mr. Cafik). Although there is a limiting factor in the remarks of the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) I wonder if this should be applied by the Chair, or does the House wish the time for the minister to be more flexible?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is it agreed that speeches be limited to 15 minutes, with reasonable extension for the minister?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. McGrath: He needs all the time he can get.

Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to take part in this debate although I believe the time could be better used for some important legislation.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Whelan: We can make a comparison, Mr. Speaker, between some of the world's best remembered speeches. For instance, the Gettysburg address comprised only 268 words. Somebody counted the words used in the committee hearings inquiring into egg marketing, and it was a million some hundred thousand. I only hope that 268 words of my speech will be remembered tonight.

This thing called CEMA, the first born child of national marketing legislation, was asked for by the producers and the provinces, and it is basically their responsibility to provide the co-operation to see that it does what they want. Some people have said that last year I could have controlled CEMA. Under the authority I have as Minister of Agriculture all I could have done was tell them they were finished by withdrawing the federal authority vested in them. I thought it better not to do that.

Some people have said that I covered up the facts. I want to say again as I said before, that is a falsehood and anyone who has studied the situation knows that.

I hope that within the next ten days we can announce the appointments to the National Farm Products Marketing Council, Mr. Speaker.

On December 16 I gave the Canadian Egg Marketing Agency an ultimatum: come up with a workable plan or