

Farm Products Marketing Agencies Bill

Bill C-176 will establish a national farm products marketing council, will authorize the establishment of national marketing agencies for farm products and will allow producers to participate in national farm marketing if they so desire. Farmers have been demanding this legislation for years.

I have never listened to a debate where the issues involved were so completely misunderstood by members opposite. They prefer to forget that a majority of the producers of a particular commodity have to agree to be placed under this marketing legislation. The Standing Committee on Agriculture held 83 hearings on this bill and its predecessor, heard 301 witnesses and sat for 211 hours. I well remember the long examinations carried out by the hon. member for Crowfoot (Mr. Horner) during the all-night session when he was unable to elicit any evidence which would support these amendments. I doubt if any hon. members opposite sent the transcript of that 11-hour committee meeting home to their constituents with an accompanying letter stating, "Look what I have done for agriculture".

The first speaker on Tuesday afternoon, the hon. member for Peace River (Mr. Baldwin) said that the bill—could have a divisive or detrimental effect by stopping, easing or preventing the free flow of goods and services and people from one part of this land to the other—

He also stated:

—that in the case of *Murphy v. Canadian Pacific Railway Company*, decided by the Supreme Court of Canada in 1958, it was suggested by the judges of the court that section 121 of the British North America Act applies not only to prevent provinces but also the federal government from dealing with the full flow of goods and property from one part of the country to another.

I suggest that the hon. member has misapprehended the rationale of the case. It is true that Mr. Justice Rand did say, at page 638, "this country is one economic unit", but he went on to say:

When the exaction is looked at in its true character, as an incident in the administration of a comprehensive extraprovincial marketing scheme, with its necessity of realizing its object in the returns to producers for all production except for local purposes, interference with the free current of trade across provincial lines disappears.

The hon. member for Athabasca (Mr. Yewchuk) also misread the case when he said that what is at stake in discussion of this bill is the question of free trade among the provinces. The *Murphy* case did not set out any such conclusion. It was an appeal by the appellant *Murphy* who bought grain in Manitoba for the purpose of shipping it to British Columbia in defiance of the Canadian Wheat Board Act, and he lost his appeal. This case is not an authority for the proposition enunciated by hon. members. I suggest that hon. members are criticizing the bill not for what it is but for what it is not.

• (midnight)

The hon. member for Lambton-Kent (Mr. McCutcheon) was very critical of marketing boards in the province of Ontario yesterday afternoon. He said in this House that:—so far no concrete evidence has been put forward to show that marketing boards have in fact improved the situation for the farmer.

I differ with the hon. member and say that for many years facts show that there has been widespread support

[Mr. Stafford.]

for marketing boards in the province of Ontario. Such statements lead me to the conclusion that the hon. member is unfamiliar with the history of marketing boards in the province of Ontario.

For example, when the Farm Products Marketing Act of Ontario was first passed in 1937, it had certain deficiencies. As the year passed it has been amended to become a useful piece of legislation. Bill C-176 may not be perfect, as is usually the case with any piece of legislation when it is first drafted. However, it is a good start. I believe commodity groups can proceed to establish national marketing boards under the act and as the years pass these will progressively change and develop as agriculture develops.

In Ontario there are now 19 boards formed under the Farm Products Marketing Act and the Milk Act. I suggest that the consensus would be that the lot of the farmer has improved as a result of the implementation of the provincial marketing boards. Whatever the imperfections of these boards may be, they represent the highest common measure of agreement in the farm community. The advantage of the boards is manifest. The only marketing board that has been abandoned is the Ontario onion producers marketing board, and obviously the Ontario sugar beet marketing board when the only sugar manufacturer in Ontario closed its factory.

Organized marketing in the province of Ontario is well established. The total output of agricultural products in Ontario this year is in excess of \$1,300 million and it is most significant that approximately 60 per cent of this agricultural output went through marketing boards. Any time a new marketing plan comes into existence or a major change is made the farm products marketing board of Ontario conducts an expression of opinion among the producers whereby a majority of two-thirds of those voting must be in favour.

We are told by hon. members opposite that farmers are opposed to regulation. If that is so how is it that the farmers have not taken opposition to the 19 farm marketing boards which are in operation at the present time in the province of Ontario? I suppose there is nobody in this House who would be bold enough to go to the farmers and advocate the abolition of these marketing boards. Take, for instance, the Ontario milk marketing board. It buys all the milk in Ontario from the farmers and resells it to the processors. It fixes quotas and prices. It is a full marketing agency. It has complete control of the milk from the time it is picked up by the milk transporters until it is delivered to the dairies.

The Board has rationalized transport and has substantially increased the price to producers from what it was before the board came into operation. The Ontario broiler chicken producers marketing board allots marketing quotas to producers and sets the live price of broiler chickens each week. The Ontario turkey marketing board allots marketing quotas. The Ontario pork producers marketing board, formerly the Ontario hog producers marketing board, has authority to set the price of pork but actually uses a very sophisticated teletype auction system which ensures that the small producer with 20 hogs to sell has the same chance on the market as the large producer. The hon. member for Lambton-Kent suggested that it was an indictment against the hog producers