

would have done better because we lacked the tools that would have allowed us to do more.

I feel that is the core of the problem. People might say: The hon. member for Bellechasse must understand one thing, that is we must trade, export and import. I agree on that. However, when we import table eggs at a price three times higher than that of breaker eggs, which we can export, we must export a great number to be able to reach the price of table eggs, which we can and sometimes must import, when we are forced by need to do so. Mr. Speaker, I feel we are not being fair with the hon. Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Whelan). Although he may be blamed, he has a part to play. He has his responsibilities, but if we deal behind his back, he will not be able to make miracles.

The duty of the Minister of Agriculture is to assure the Canadian people that they will be able to obtain the amount and quality of food required to meet their needs.

Well, Mr. Speaker, it so happens that permit and licence controls as to farm products export and import are in the hands of another minister, who is often pressured by those who are interested in the import and export of these products for a profit and not for the common good of our country.

The National Farm Product Marketing Council and CEMA faced difficulties because, in spite of the leaders' goodwill, 3 million dozens of eggs have been put on the market. This is due to a quota set under Canadian law. In the meantime, importers have obtained licences to import from other countries a similar quantity of eggs put on the market without any quota and not liable to the Canadian products marketing. This factor tends to alter the normal play of supply and demand, since quotas can be established only from the data and needs of our home market.

Mr. Speaker, such is the problem. If we do not stop and pass legislation to provide the Minister of Agriculture with the required authority to issue those licences after consultation with the Canadian Egg Marketing Agency, there is no point making speeches in the House passing legislation. We shall never achieve the objectives we aim at because automatically cards are faked. This is my view on this question and this is the way I have spoken about it in the night of December 30, 1971. What I had foreseen then proved to be right. The situation we are now in is lamentable. Neither consumers nor producers are satisfied with it. I know producers who have suffered considerable losses. We still have to take that problem into consideration and study it as it really is.

Let's think a moment of the losses sustained by egg producers, when the laying hen has given everything it could, when it has produced everything it could in the 16 square inches of space that it can use. Then, he has to put it on the market under the form of meat, which is still good for human consumption, but at what price?

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Mr. Speaker, I urge all members to look up in the newspapers the market price for fowl meat, that is layers not yet ready for consumption. They will find out, as I did and as I have known for a long time, that the offering price is 3 cents a pound only. How can we expect egg producers to compensate with the sale of a certain product, when the price is below cost and they have to stay in

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production to last through the production cycle if they want at some time to make a profit and remain in business.

When eggs are sold in the supermarkets, are the Canadian housewives in a position to check whether they are buying Canadian versus American, Cuban or other eggs? Definitely no. All they know is they are buying eggs. I therefore believe it would be in the Canadian public's interest if we had an act under which products and product origin had to be identified, so our Canadian housewives would know. It is very well to tell customers to buy Canadian. But when the goods are not marked as to origin, how do you expect the consumer to follow suit? I feel the time has come we had in our statutes specific legislation providing for compulsory identification of products, applying even in the case of eggs.

It is already done in gloves for instance. When we import gloves, whether from India or Japan, they are so marked. Why not have the same thing with farm products? In my opinion, this would be a good way to protect those responsible for the management of farm products marketing against unneeded import penetration. We could then gauge those people's efficiency. We manackle them, we create enormous problems for them, and then we tell them they were not efficient, they were unsuccessful.

Mr. Speaker, I think we have to be honest with those people and act in such a way they could resort to this measure. If they do not succeed to their objective, we will then be in a position to blame them, to tell them they are incompetent, not fit to occupy such or such a post in such a government agency, including the Farm Products Marketing Agency. Mr. Speaker, I want to defend the interests of both producers and consumers. In so doing, I believe I work for the best interests of all Canadians. I believe this measure is required, otherwise, we will never succeed in meeting the objective we are aiming at.

I think that licenses for egg imports or exports should be issued under the authority of the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Whelan). The minister knows my views about this. It does not mean that I do not trust the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce (Mr. Gillespie), but it is his responsibility to see that as concerns food Canadians are supplied in a reasonable way and reasonable quantities. If we lay some obligations upon him we also should give him tools so that he can fulfill satisfactorily his duties to all Canadians.

I am aware of the constitutional jurisdiction problem regarding imports and exports control and it is a very ticklish issue. When you wish to get your supplies from a province, a provincial marketing agency tells you: It is under my jurisdiction, I am the one who decides if such or such product must be imported or not. In another province it will be the same. It really becomes a problem, a constitutional issue. And we know, Mr. Speaker, how costly all those constitutional squabbles have been. Sometimes it was about important issues but sometimes it was for mere trifle.

The Canadian taxpayers have to pay for all this and while we are quarrelling and go to courts, lawyers are getting richer, judges are bored and have trouble making a decision. We, the parliamentarians, make everything possible to contribute to a spirit of mutual understanding