

Farm Products Marketing Agencies Bill

suffered from was imports because they had to leave their apples under the trees; it was too expensive to pick them. They questioned how it was proposed to raise the income of farmers without doing anything in this regard. The amendment was moved in committee on several occasions. It is the same type of amendment that has been written into other bills such as the textile bill, where a product was protected—but it was turned down in regard to agriculture.

Initially this bill contained clauses which ensured that the interests of consumers would be looked after before the interests of producers. I supposed that this was an agricultural bill brought forward by the Department of Agriculture to look after the interests of farmers, yet its language suggests that consumers are to be placed on a higher level than producers.

● (5:50 p.m.)

Controlling production without controlling imports simply means that the government will have the right to set the price of agricultural products. It will be able to perpetuate a cheap food policy in this country by allowing imports in or by shutting them off at will. If the price of a commodity rises to a level at which farmers can survive if they produce it, the government can simply import that commodity and control or lower its price. That is what is done with beef. For one month in 12, Canadians eat beef produced in Australia. The minister has been questioned about this in the House and has said, "Well, the need is there. We do not have the beef available." You do not mean to tell me that if beef was not brought in people would not buy Canadian beef that is already on shop shelves, and thus raise the price to the level that beef producers ought to get. Why, back in 1952, 18 years ago, beef prices were higher than today. You can imagine what the costs of production were 18 years ago. Look at the current prices of machinery and at the costs of labour.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Richard): Order, please. I must advise the hon. member that his time has expired.

[Translation]

Mr. Léonel Beaudoin (Richmond): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to make some remarks on the amendments proposed by the hon. member for Crowfoot (Mr. Horner), namely amendments Nos 1, 5, and 22 which deal with certain implications of Bill C-176.

As members of the committee, we have travelled throughout Canada from Halifax to Vancouver and found that producer associations, mainly primary producers, were seriously worried. As for the bill, Primary producers are sceptical about the bill because most of them throughout Canada are used to work on their own.

A farmer wants to be his own boss. He wants to sell his products himself and be the master of his production and his prices. He also wants in all regards to be the master of his future.

I think that with the passing of Bill C-176, the producer will no longer be his own boss. He will have to

[Mr. Downey.]

think in a different way, to act in a different way and also to decide his future in a different way.

Particularly when we visited Ontario, we found that many producer associations were concerned about the implications of Bill C-176. In the course of our trip, we met 78 producer associations, 90 per cent of which grouped primary producers.

I should like to call the attention of hon. members on the most frequent questions raised in the briefs that were presented to us respecting the producers' concern. They asked: Who will control imports? Who will control the boards? Who will pay the administrative costs? Will some provinces be allowed to withdraw from the marketing agencies? Can such a system generate local favoritism? Will the farmer or the producer take the decisions within the marketing agencies? Will the producer be entitled to prosper at an equal rate in all provinces? Will the rights already secured under the British North America Act be more or less diluted by this bill? Will the farmer now have to decide or negotiate on quotas? Are the quotas transferable? Will all farm products be regulated by a quota system?

All these questions were put to us by farming groups. Many were in favour of the proposed measures; however, almost everybody agreed on the implications of the bill, though mildly. Almost all expressed the wish that their member should move amendments to the bill.

In committee, 29 amendments were proposed. Some were approved and others were rejected. However, I believe that all of them would be essential for friendly understanding between the producers from the various provinces.

We are sorry, indeed, to see that some provincial governments, namely the Ontario government, have already placed an embargo on Quebec products.

We know a bill like this one is necessary to put an end to this type of thing. But before approving it on third reading, I feel we should give it further thought.

Mr. Speaker, may I call it six o'clock?

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[English]

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Mr. Bell: Mr. Speaker, could the government House leader tell us what business the House will consider tomorrow?

Mr. MacEachen: Mr. Speaker, I would advise the House that tomorrow we propose to call second reading of the bill to amend the Senate and House of Commons Act.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Isn't that a bit hasty?

[Translation]

Mr. Fortin: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order.