

this bill is and to what extent such representation is not only desirable, but also necessary.

[English]

Mr. William Knowles (Norfolk-Haldimand): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the minister on bringing Bill C-197 back into the House to be dealt with, rather than making statements through the press and other news media of this country. I have reason for being nice to the minister; I am hoping he will visit Norfolk County this fall to assist in the opening of an agricultural exhibition. We look forward to the minister accepting the invitation extended by the agricultural society of that area.

I rise in this debate in order to prove the consistency of my remarks. Very early in this session, in the Speech from the Throne and in a preliminary announcement the minister declared his intention of introducing legislation which would permit national marketing boards to operate in Canada. I wrote a newspaper article in which I said I welcomed wholeheartedly this announcement and looked forward to the introduction of the legislation.

I was completely dismayed when I found that the bill which was presented did not contain some very vital sections. I wrote in the article that it was absolutely essential for primary producers to retain a measure of control over any national agency which might be set up. The government could have obtained the acceptance of all opposition parties had it written into the bill a clause spelling out beyond any doubt that primary producers would be appointed or elected to the national marketing council and to the national marketing agencies.

• (4:30 p.m.)

In the second place, the government could have obtained ready acquiescence to their proposals had they simply carried out a referendum or plebiscite among the primary producers to discover whether they were favourable to the establishment of a marketing agency. If they did not find it workable, or if they believed it was not working to their advantage, they should have the privilege of voting it out again. This is the principle under which marketing boards operate in Ontario. In that province a 66 $\frac{2}{3}$ majority of producers must vote in favour of a scheme. They also have the privilege of voting out an agency if they find it is not working in their best interests—and this has been done on

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more than one occasion in Ontario. Surely we are not asking too much when we propose that the government write this type of safeguard or safety valve into the legislation we are now considering.

The minister's assurance that primary producers will be on the board is simply not good enough. As has been pointed out by my hon. friends, the minister has the best intentions, no doubt, and as long as he retains his present portfolio he will no doubt see that this is done. We want an undertaking to be in black and white. Our producers are not satisfied by a simple assurance from the minister or an indication that it may be done at the pleasure of the government or of the Governor in Council.

We are also suspicious of a promise that amendments will be made at the committee stage. We have had some eye-opening experiences on committees dealing with other pieces of legislation, when perfectly acceptable and reasonable amendments, drawn up with legal advice and worded so as not to contradict the principles of the measure concerned, were voted down by a majority of the members. This situation was not explained to the producers across the country. The government said, "All we have to do is get the bill into committee and all your recommendations and proposals will be listened to and accepted." This is just not the case.

The opposition welcomes the assurance by the President of the Privy Council (Mr. Macdonald) and the minister that the government will guarantee the acceptance of reasonable amendments to this legislation. Only in light of this assurance are we ready to accept a time limit on this debate, are we willing to see this discussion reach a conclusion and have the bill sent to the Standing Committee on Agriculture.

The primary producers in my own area whom I have contacted or who have contacted me concerning Bill C-197 have expressed mixed reactions. The broiler growers are among the few groups across Canada who are in a position to take advantage of this legislation, and even they were not familiar with the bureaucratic and autocratic way in which the national marketing council was to be set up. Then again, everyone became suspicious when there were not sufficient copies of the bill to send to all those who wrote enquiring exactly what it contained. The Ontario Flue-cured Tobacco Growers Marketing Board adopted a ho-hum attitude toward the legislation. They would not oppose it but they are not, perhaps, in a position to take advantage