

Farm Products Marketing Agencies Bill

Purina feed dealer west of Toronto. He owns a turkey hatchery and a turkey processing plant. He has about 50 per cent of the Ontario quota, which amounts to about 7 per cent of the Canadian turkey quota. He has over 100,000 hens, a broiler quota and 500 head of beef cattle. At the time he was going around Ontario campaigning for quotas and supply management, he had buildings under construction in order to increase his quota. I have pictures of those buildings under construction. When this was brought to the attention of the court, he backed off and stopped building. That is a portfolio of one gentleman seeking supply management in this country.

I have another portfolio of an individual who appeared before the present egg inquiry in Ontario. This lady was only two weeks out of hospital after having a baby. She has seven or eight children. She told how they scraped and saved in order to keep their family going. Yet they stayed in business against the large integrators. I quote one small section from her brief:

In the proposed marketing plan the producer-grader is assured of being able to continue his present operations. However, in the same plan it also clearly states that the board shall have control of all eggs. I haven't been able to obtain from any board director quotas at any meeting I have attended or a clear direction as to the board's intention. Therefore, we cannot help but be apprehensive when we see what happened to producer-graders in Quebec under Fedco.

It is only logical that if producer-graders are allowed to continue under the proposed plan, they will become very quickly a thorn in the side of the board. They can undersell, and, most important, they have quality and the personal touch many people appreciate. Once again referring to Fedco, it was not only the price differential that caused the black marketing of eggs, it was quality. Drovers of Quebecers came to Ontario seeking fresh eggs and what did Quebec become but literally a police state; raiding stores, stopping and searching trucks and even individual cars. Democracy?

That is what one person has to say about supply management. She went on to talk about the fact that the farmer feeder can still compete against the large integrators. This was borne out in the evidence time and again at the egg inquiry in Ontario.

It is the large integrator who is worried about what is happening. He wants to maintain the price with supply management. We run into cases where people tie themselves up in order to increase their quotas to feed companies and integrated operations of this type. Even though they are producers of grain and have grain on their farms, their contract which enables them to borrow the money to carry on states that they must go to the mill to buy their feed. They cannot use their own feed. In effect, they cannot function as farmer feeders any longer because of this credit requirement. It is these people who depend on the integrators. It is the integrators who are pushing the concept of supply management.

On top of that, we still have inherent in Bill C-176 the clause that relates to anyone involved with the bill not being liable to prosecution under the anti-combines act. What value is the competition act to the small producer looking after himself in a situation where he is competing against the integrator? The fact is that in many cases quotas represent a great deal of money. I and others have spoken of what happened with the tobacco situation in southern Ontario. We have the same situation here with regard to the egg quotas where quotas are worth \$3 a bird.

I have people on my list who have 250,000 or 300,000 birds. A quota is worth over \$1 million to these people. We are trading in very large figures here. This is what is happening today with the concept of supply management.

There are various other factors that enter into this bill which have been well covered today. I was disappointed when I listened to the hon. member for Elgin (Mr. Stafford). I hesitate to mention this when the member is not in the chamber, but he spoke of the success of the Ontario hog board and how it set price. He spoke of oversupply and of the great things that boards like this do.

This country is the next door neighbour of the United States. How much of the total hog production do we have? Is it 5 per cent, 7 per cent? I think it is around 7 per cent. Whether we produce or do not produce, they will come in and fill the gap. It means nothing if we reduce our stocks or capacity to produce, because somebody else will just step in and fill the gap.

• (1:10 a.m.)

We depend a great deal on the supports they have in the United States in respect of their agricultural commodities. It is true this might work against us in respect of horticultural crops, but in respect of grain and oilseed crops all the production in the United States which has support on crops works to our advantage, because it maintains the price at a certain level below the border and the benefits flow over to us. So we cannot afford to think about import controls even though import controls would be inherent in any successful supply management situation.

I shall not go any further than that; I know the hour is late. It seems rather in keeping with the way the government has conducted itself on this bill that it sees fit to bring in third reading on such a bill some time after 11 o'clock at night the day before New Year's. The minister had the opportunity at the time Bill C-197 died on the Order Paper, as he did when Bill C-176 was introduced in this House, to make all these changes we have been talking about over the months, instead of making them at this time and place. I think it does the minister very little credit to have this situation develop at this point in time.

Mr. Murray McBride (Lanark-Renfrew-Carleton): Mr. Speaker, I have been in this House now for four years and I do not think there has ever been an occasion so auspicious as this night when, at 15 minutes after one o'clock in the morning, we are in the middle of a debate on third reading of a major farm marketing bill which will do a great deal to improve agriculture in Canada.

As a person who has been heavily involved in agriculture, and in the dairy industry primarily, as one who has spent many late hours on problems involving cows calving or general farm work, who has had the privilege to attend the same institution as the hon. member for Kent-Essex (Mr. Danforth) as an agricultural representative in Eastern Ontario in the very historic counties of Prescott and Glengarry, as a person involved in dairy farming, as one involved in the agricultural industry as a professional agriculturalist, as a graduate in animal husbandry from the Ontario Agricultural College, and as one who has worked more in agriculture than many members far older than myself in this House, I have never had an opportunity to work into the small hours of the morning doing