

Farm Products Marketing Agencies Bill

headline reads: "All Ontario Farmers!" It deals with a lot of erroneous arguments and at the bottom it says: "Mail to Jack Horner, MP, Parliament Buildings, Ottawa". There are some other names but it does not say who they are or what they are doing. It doesn't say that they inserted it or that it is being sponsored by them. There are the names, "Maurice McCallum—Carp" and "Omer Beriault—Green Valley", and it says: "Representing a group of farmers". It does not say who put the ad in the newspaper or that they sponsor it. Anyway, I accept the hon. member's assertion that he is not responsible for these ads.

Mr. Ricard: You tried it and did not succeed, Mr. Minister.

Mr. Horner: I will give you the coupons.

Mr. Olson: I have a few coupons too. I want to deal with the substance of the ad, if I may. It reads that this policy "inevitably leads to total and arbitrary government control". The fact is, Mr. Speaker, that the bill provides that no agency will be established unless a majority of the producers of the commodity wish it.

Mr. Horner: How is that majority determined?

Mr. Olson: That is specifically stated in clauses 7 and 17 of the bill which provide a wide range of the type of agencies, from those solely involved in promotion to those which come under provincial legislation to control production—that is, under the delegation of provincial authority. The nature of the agency will depend upon the plan that is negotiated between the provinces and the federal government. Producers will decide whether they like a plan, because Bill C-176 itself does not provide for production controls. This bill does not give authority for production controls in any way, shape or form. It says what the marketing agencies may administer, but no attempt is made to give authority to those marketing boards nor to give them the right to control production. The reason is that this is entirely under provincial authority—

Mr. Horner: Read clause 2(d) of the bill.

Mr. Olson:—and at the present time all provinces have acts that provide for this. Dealing with the amendments before us now, in motions Nos. 1, 5 and 22 there are no exemptions from provincial legislation of any specific commodity whether it be beef, pork, apples, potatoes or anything else. Another point I want to make, Mr. Speaker, concerns the statement in this ad that "government appointees shall set prices of farm products without negotiations with farmers." The bill provides that the make-up of the agency will be as set out in the plan; thus, it could be by farmer election or any other method that is accepted in the plan. Indeed, there are other places where the committee did in fact strengthen it. We knew it was going to be that way without it being articulated, but the committee spelled out that there must be a majority of producers both on national council and in the marketing agencies.

[Mr. Olson.]

The next point I wish to deal with is where the ad asks: "Why are there no import controls in C-176? Because imports are the regulator of the farmer's price..." Mr. Speaker, import controls are not provided in Bill C-176 because ample authority exists in other legislation. There are other matters I could deal with in this respect, Mr. Speaker, but I shall not take up any more time on it. I hope that my remarks convey to some degree how inaccurate the assertions in this ad have been and the extent to which they have misled farmers all across the country. I hope these people will realize that they have done a very great disservice to the farming community.

The amendment before us would place in jeopardy the meaning of an agricultural product since it proposes to delete all the words after "agriculture". I do not believe I can accept this amendment because it would remove those words which are used to clarify but not to restrict the term "farm product".

Amendment No. 5 which is also before us would delete paragraph (ii) of subclause (g) of clause 2. If this were accepted, in effect it would allow an agency authorized to operate within seven provinces to exercise its power in all ten provinces. We made it very clear that we do not intend to impose this and indeed I am not even sure that we could if a province did not agree. This paragraph was introduced to ensure that the agency could only exercise its powers, (a) with respect to production produced within the area of its jurisdiction, and (b) within its area respecting production produced elsewhere in Canada outside its jurisdiction. I think there is need for the latter power because it is only with respect to entry into the region, and only then should circumstances arise which would make it evident that there was an attempt to circumvent the purpose of the agency within the designated region. There has been argument about this with respect to amendment No. 5. I suggest that it would completely frustrate the purpose, and that is one of the main reasons why provincial legislation by itself has been insufficient to cope with the situation.

When the marketing orders and the application of that legislation is confined to a very small area or a restricted area, then of course there are ways of circumventing and therefore frustrating the purpose of the provincial government. We want to make sure this does not happen. The argument that some provinces other than those which have joined in a marketing plan ought to have open, complete and free access to the market that is being regulated under a plan agreed to by other provinces completely negates the purpose or some of the solutions which Bill C-176 is designed to correct.

• (4:30 p.m.)

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, since I suspect that there will be several other opportunities to speak on the amendments before the House may I say a word or two about the other amendments included in the group which we are discussing. The amendments contained in paragraphs (a) and (b) of motion No. 22 seek to inhibit the successful operation of an agency. They propose that an agency may not be given authority to protect its opera-