

I cannot support the Conservative amendment because as a farmer I believe in orderly marketing. Although I think this is a poor bill, it is the only one around and we have to put up with it. Certainly as an opposition member on this side of the House I have found it very difficult to do very much with the bill. We have suggested some amendments. The hon. member for Lanark-Renfrew-Carleton said that we should be criticizing the government for not having promoted adequate farm legislation sooner. I agree with him in that respect. As a farmer I have been unhappy with the way in which farmers have been ignored and I have been unhappy with the marginal position of farmers in the marketplace. If this marketing bill were to help me or other farmers to obtain a stronger voice in settling this problem, I would be only too happy to support it. I wish it were a better bill, but I do not see how the amendment before us would bring this about.

A lady from the Consumers' Association of Canada complained to me. She said that prices to consumers might increase and we would be in a position to dictate to the consumer. I am not particularly interested in dictating to consumers, but as a producer I would like to be in the same position as anybody else when it comes to setting the price. That is what I am interested in. I would like to see this bill give farmers a bargaining position in setting a fair price for their products. We should give the farmers a good bargaining position. Since this is only a permissive bill, it is logical that farmers should be able to pick up the ball and run with it as they see fit.

To be fair to consumers and to those who process farmers' products, I agree that they need a steady supply of a product if they are to manage it well from the processing or distribution point of view. In order to get a steady price you need a steady supply of a product. This makes me think of the story of a little brown hen which sent her eggs to market only to find out what she was not going to get for them. This type of thing has gone on for too long.

It seems to me that even a poor bill such as this is better than no bill at all. For this reason we support the bill, hoping that it will be amended before we are finished with it. A bill must be applicable and it should have an adequate framework. This bill should provide for small farmers, because they should have the right to market their products and they should have the right to a place in the sun. I am not speaking only in the social sense but in the economic sense as well. I would like to make certain that the smaller farmers have a percentage of the quota so that they will not be frozen out of the market as soon as they are able to produce a product that is needed in the marketplace.

May I call it six o'clock?

PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

SUBJECT MATTER OF QUESTIONS TO BE DEBATED

Mr. Speaker: It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 40, to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Regina East (Mr. Burton)—Public Service—

Farm Products Marketing Agencies Bill

Displaying of political posters by employees at home or on personal property; the hon. member for Humber-St. George's-St. Barbe (Mr. Marshall)—Industry—Pulp and paper—Problems discussed at conference and type of aid offered; the hon. member for Moose Jaw (Mr. Skoberg)—Grain—Request for tabling of report on rationalization of handling and transportation.

It being six o'clock, I do now leave the chair.

At six o'clock the House took recess.

AFTER RECESS

The House resumed at 8 p.m.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

FARM PRODUCTS MARKETING AGENCIES BILL

ESTABLISHMENT OF NATIONAL MARKETING COUNCIL AND AGENCIES

The House resumed consideration of Bill C-176, to establish the National Farm Products Marketing Council and to authorize the establishment of national marketing agencies for farm products, as reported (with amendments) from the Standing Committee on Agriculture, and motions Nos. 1, 5 and 22 (Mr. Horner).

Mr. Thomson: Mr. Speaker, when one starts his speech before the dinner hour one is never quite sure of the stage reached when the House rose, and I am sure people in the public galleries are not aware of what is happening when a member rises to continue a speech.

Before the dinner recess I was referring to the problem of a small farmer who attempts to get an adequate price in the marketplace for his product. It seems reasonable to me that farmers should join hands with their neighbours and use a marketing board, agency or some form of market management body to reach a common solution of their individual problems. I have known many small farmers who tried to solve their marketing problems themselves. One method they used was to attempt to produce more from the same amount of land, cutting costs and having members of their family contribute free labour. However, generally the net effect was a reduced price in the marketplace and the farmer and his family received less than they should for their produce. Well organized sections of society do not do this, so it is not reasonable that farmers should do it.

Speaking as a farmer, I say it is time for farmers to forget individual efforts. The idea that a farmer can raise any number of chickens, hogs, eggs or what-have-you without regard to the marketplace, and later apply for a government subsidy, is ridiculous in this day and age. Farmers must accept some responsibility and organization. Up to date commercial farming does not operate in the same way as subsistence farming used to work. Farmers nowadays have certain costs that must be met. They can operate on a deficit only so long before facing bank-