

*Farm Products Marketing Agencies Bill*

are therefore capable of justifying the fears that result from the wide control exercised by the government in that field. We agree with the government but on one condition, namely that the producers themselves deal with their own problems.

Why should the government have to appoint the chairman, the vice-chairman or the other members of that national council? Why could the producers themselves not do it? As to the agencies that will be created, why should they be controlled by the state and not by the representatives elected by the producers' associations? In other words, the contents of this bill could remain the same but greater consideration should be given to free enterprise so as to allow for a greater respect for the producer himself.

I wonder why the Catholic Farmers Union, of which most Quebec producers are members does not organize all those things if it likes the bill and supports it? What prevents the CFU from doing it? Why did it not create those agencies and that council, even if it had to have such action approved by the government? We recognize the principle of government assistance.

We all agree on that, but state help should only complement private enterprise and individual freedom. This is the principle that we want to maintain while opposing the way the government sees the National Farm Products Marketing Council and its agencies.

Before approving this proposal, since it implies support and agreement from the provinces, should we, once more, not ask ourselves whether, we are not putting the cart before the horse? Would it not be advisable first to consult the provinces and let them decide themselves on the character and the role of these agencies?

The National Council will be made up of not less than three and not more than nine members. But will these members all come from Ontario, or else, from Quebec? Will they represent the whole of the Canadian producers?

No doubt we believe it. The government should see to it that the representation is fair. However, if each province decided for itself, we would be more certain that the Council is truly representative of the whole country.

Instead of doing nothing and complaining all these years, without ever settling anything, the producers and the CFU should long ago have forced the government to give its dairy policy a different orientation.

[Mr. Matte.]

However, I believe that too often the CFU was acting in collusion with the government. The remark might appear somewhat callous, but I wonder what would happen if an organization as powerful as the producers' union finally decided to take action. I have the impression that it would be worse still than the Post Office strike or any other strike. If it becomes impossible to get food, the situation will be really dangerous.

● (9:20 p.m.)

How is it that the producers' union has never succeeded in forcing the government to implement a more efficient farm policy particularly in connection with the Quebec producers? Indeed, a group of Cr ditistes members from Quebec had to be elected in order to compel the government to concern itself at last about the eastern producers, a fact on which we pride ourselves. We are happy to have contributed to waking up the government and the whole population so that they have become aware at last of the urgent problems facing the farming industry in Quebec.

That is why we would not want a piece of legislation good in itself and the purpose of which is justifiable, but which does not take sufficiently into account those directly concerned.

Would it be that the producer today is in such a state of stagnation that he is not even aware of his real situation but finding himself in a dilemma, he is willing to cling to a straw, whether it be a socialist or even a communist legislation.

At first sight, he considers this bill as relatively good. However, when the law has been in force for some time, he will realize that he might lose all freedom of action. Indeed, he will be sorry then, because he will have to recognize that the agencies will make regulations affecting all aspects of marketing: from production through packaging to the sale of the products.

Naturally, a product is made to be consumed. Therefore, it is necessary to see to it that it is sold. The Cr ditistes say that louder still than others. It is most ridiculous to claim that it is impossible to sell products because there are no buyers. It is not true that there are no buyers. There are quite a lot but they have no money. This is one of our current problems.

We wonder therefore whether the Minister of Agriculture should not seriously consider bringing significant changes to this bill in