

Farm Products Marketing Agencies Bill

area of Medicine Hat there is not too much production of honey or maple syrup confections, though these products are referred to in the bill. Perhaps there is some egg and poultry production but I do not think there is much. If the minister is party to deciding who to appoint to the council, he will also have to decide whether the appointees have sufficient practical knowledge of the subject.

In conclusion, I ask the minister to rise in his place when I sit down and say that he will appoint people to the council in the way suggested in the amendment. I am not completely sold on the amendment, but I am sold on the argument that those who are engaged in the marketing of agricultural products should be represented on the council. If the minister will tell the House that these people will be represented, then I am sure that most of the members of my party—I cannot speak for them all—will support this bill.

As I said when I began my remarks, we are in favour of a National Farm Products Marketing Council, just as we are in favour of the Canadian Wheat Board. Both these bodies can serve their purpose if given the tools to do the job. This will require people with practical knowledge who are not unnecessarily hindered in setting up organizations and assuming their responsibilities. In my opinion, we do not need a dozen agencies or associations all doing the same job. What we need is an effective association to do an effective job. The only way to do an effective job is to make sure that the people who do the job are thoroughly familiar with the task at hand.

• (9:10 p.m.)

[Translation]

Mr. René Matte (Champlain): Mr. Speaker, like my colleagues, in principle, I am in favour of this bill, the purpose of which is to promote sales of farm products both in Canada and abroad.

However, state control per se involves certain risks. There is every evidence that some clauses of the bill can do more harm than good to producers. That is the reason for our criticisms, which we would like to be constructive.

Mr. Speaker, the examples of the Canadian Wheat Board and the Canadian Dairy Commission, which are supposed to control production of wheat and dairy products, speak for themselves. These two agencies actually have not quite achieved the purpose for which they were established.

Needless to say that not only has the Dairy Commission not improved the situation of the

dairy industry but that the situation has worsened because of the direction the department is giving to this agency that is determined to gradually kill off all producers in order to reduce production to such an extent that we shall be compelled to import dairy products.

If we were the only ones to say this, it could be alleged that this was part of the opposition's tactics. But the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) himself stated yesterday in New Zealand that by gradually reducing milk subsidies, Canada could, in the near or not so near future, buy more dairy products from New Zealand.

Now, Mr. Speaker, that surely lets the cat out of the bag! We understand why the government insisted so to penalize the Canadian milk producers who, through excellence, improved the production of their herds too much and, consequently, produced a bit more than the allowed quota.

I was a professor for 13 years before being elected a member of the House of Commons. When a pupil came first with better grades than usual, I would congratulate and reward him. However, today, we penalize those who work too well, we penalize the producers who become more and more efficient and whose lands and herds are highly productive. Never before have we ever seen anything like it. Surely, such inconsistency cannot be found in any other area.

Yet, it exists in the dairy industry, if we go by the attitude of the Canadian Dairy Commission headed by the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Olson). As I was saying a while ago, it is not just that the remarks of one of the members of the opposition are improper. Indeed, the Prime Minister himself has just confirmed that the government intends to decrease and, eventually, to do away with the subsidies to dairy producers so that, in due course, Canada can import more from New Zealand.

If dairy producers in Quebec were not to agree with that, someone would be sorry. And so, by adopting such a policy, we prove those parties right who, in Quebec, have a certain strength and are feared in the rest of Canada. If the Quebec producers continue to be ignored, they will understand, at some point or other, that they have to get organized in a completely autonomous way.

We must emphasize those things so that the same mistakes will not be made when the time comes to take measures as to the agencies that will have to legislate or settle the problems concerning other farm products. We