

Farm Products Marketing Agencies Bill

is a constant struggle among the different regions in Canada. There will be litigation before one court or another, depending upon whom the minister selects to serve on the council. What say will a small region have in such a matter? What say will a small island like P.E.I. have, even though it is very much dependent on agriculture? What say will it have in comparison with a region that may include Ontario and Quebec?

• (4:30 p.m.)

I can well understand members from Ontario and Quebec saying that this legislation is fine for them. But it is idle for them to talk at the same time about unity. Surely they cannot be that short-sighted. They should be able to see a little farther than 50 or 100 miles out of Ottawa in either direction. They should be able to see clear to the coast, to the west and to the east.

Hon. members opposite argue that agencies will not be established until plebiscites are held. Let them remember there are the words "or otherwise" which must be considered in this context. This might simply mean the minister receiving a letter requesting the establishment of an agency, as may have been the case with poultry and eggs. If the price of a commodity is too low, the authorities may decide to set up a board, and all they will require is a letter asking them to do so. This does not mean that all farmers will have a chance to express their views.

The Farmers Union in Saskatchewan says it represents farmers. I suppose it represents a certain number of farmers. I know thousands of farmers who do not belong to that or any other union. But supposedly this union is speaking for them, and if it writes to say that it wants an agency established, does this mean that the producers have had an opportunity to express their views?

The hon. member for Lanark-Renfrew-Carleton (Mr. McBride) suggests that there is some guarantee with respect to the holding of a plebiscite, but I do not see any such guarantee here.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I regret to interrupt the hon. member but his time has expired.

Hon. H. A. Olson (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, early in this debate I want to deal briefly with some of the comments that have been made because I believe it is a long time since I have heard such vicious terminological inexactitudes respecting the provisions of this bill, from both the hon. member for Crowfoot (Mr. Horner) and the hon. member for Mackenzie (Mr. Korchinski).

The hon. member for Crowfoot said we were cutting the rug out from under the egg producers in Ontario because they are now in the process of deciding whether they want to set up an egg marketing body under provincial enabling legislation that has been on the statute books of Ontario for years and years. Mr. Speaker, passage of this bill does not set up any marketing agency, and those hon. members know it very well. If they want to be the least bit honest they should admit this. This is enabling legislation of the kind which has been on the Ontario statute books for years, and it does not interfere in any way, shape or form with what is taking place there.

I know what the public debate in Ontario has been about, and so does any other hon. member who has taken

time to listen. The producers generally are in favour of having a marketing agency, so that they can have some influence on orderly marketing with respect to those products in Ontario, providing that the same marketing system is applied across the country on a national basis. But they are not in favour of setting up a board that will restrict their production and at the same time allow great quantities of the commodity they produce to come into Ontario and not be subject to the same rules. It seems to me it is about time a little bit of honesty was shown by members of the opposition with respect to the provisions of this bill.

Mr. Horner: We believe in one Canada, not ten.

Mr. Olson: One point has been made over and over again by the hon. member for Mackenzie. This is with respect to the false allegation that there has been some quota subsidy, or eligibility subsidy quota, transferred from the prairie provinces to other parts of Canada. That is absolutely false.

Mr. Korchinski: On a point of order—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. I will recognize the hon. member, but he should wait until the Chair recognizes him. The hon. member for Mackenzie on a point of order.

Mr. Korchinski: Mr. Speaker, I should have said on a point of privilege. I did not say that there was any transfer under the Dairy Commission. I said there was a drop in the quota eligibility in the Prairies.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Deputy Speaker: It appears to me that the hon. member for Mackenzie is making an explanatory intervention, and I will hear him for a moment or two.

Mr. Korchinski: What I did say was that there was a drop of 60,000 eligible quotas all across Canada. I said there was a 27 per cent drop in western Canada. I did not say there was a transfer.

Mr. Olson: Mr. Speaker, the record will show what the hon. member said. A number of producers have dropped out of subsidy quota eligibility, and for a number of reasons. One of the major reasons was because during 1967 and part of 1968, when there were reasonably good returns to grain producers on the Prairies, a lot of farmers dropped out because they fell below the 420 pound minimum. Here again I wish hon. members opposite would state the facts.

The action we took a couple of days ago in reinstating those who continued to ship, even though they had fallen below the minimum quota, in my view is justified. But there are in fact only a very small percentage of those who fell out of the quota eligibility who are still shipping, and of course if they do not go back over the 420 pounds they will not be reinstated.

One of the amusing things about all this is shown in the contradictions in the arguments of hon. members opposite. The hon. member for Crowfoot says that after we set up this system everybody who has a quota will get rich. Then the hon. member for Mackenzie comes along and