

In respect of the growing of tomatoes in Quebec, our marketing board pays the farmers every two weeks under contracts, and, in the case of several companies, if certain farmers wish a certain amount for some reason in advance we are ready to give them that amount. There might be one farmer or no farmers who benefit from this privilege. Therefore, I do not see a serious problem here in respect of the farmer when they are paid every 15 days or so.

Mr. GRAY: I will continue on to several other questions and then I will turn the subject over to other members who have questions they want to ask. I am happy to accord the others here the same privilege of questioning. Let me ask this question: do you think it is possible to have a fund of the type you request on a national basis in view of divided constitutional jurisdiction in agriculture?

Mr. ROBINSON: I would think you would find that the growers in Prince Edward Island, the Saint John valley or the Annapolis valley, along with the various other areas, would like to have their fund confined to themselves. I would think a national fund would be much more desirable if it could be worked out. This is something which would have to be given a good deal of study.

Mr. GRAY: Your association has not had advice on the constitutional aspects of this?

Mr. ROBINSON: No, we have not because, as I say, our association as a national body has never been involved with negotiations between the processor and grower; this always has been done at the provincial level.

Mr. GRAY: I notice at page 3 near the end of your brief you compare the producer to a businessman. Are there really many businessmen who sell the entire efforts of their year's labour to one customer as the farmer sells to the processor?

Mr. ROBINSON: I appreciate your question and, believe me, I will repeat what I have said many, many times, not here but everywhere else, when I have had occasion to talk on this point. We have to have successful farmers in order to have successful processors. We like to look upon our farmers as business associates. We feel he is not waiting all year. I know what you mean; if he contracts for 100 acres of peas that is a good part of his farm and, as far as I know, it may be all of his farm. I know what you mean. If he contracts for a hundred acres that might be a good piece of his farm; it might even be all his farm. You are saying to me: if he has all his eggs in one basket, should we not put some extra handles on that basket.

Mr. LIMOGES: In the province of Quebec not more than one or two per cent have a contract with only one firm; they mostly divide their contracts.

Mr. GRAY: Are you aware that this is not the situation in other parts of Ontario? I know you suggested it would be dangerous to give preference to any particular creditor or class of creditor. Would you then oppose the continuance of the preference now given to wage earners?

Mr. ROBINSON: No. We were not considering that Bill C-5 touched the wage earner.

Mr. GRAY: I asked that because you are stating a general principle.

Mr. ROBINSON: No, I am talking about creditors in the sense of materials.

Mr. GRAY: Assuming your clients do sell their entire crop to only one processor, does that put him in the class of the manufacturer of labels and cans and so on?

Mr. ROBINSON: In a sense we are coming back to the man with all his eggs in one basket. Perhaps he has only one basket at his disposal; I do not know.