

Government Orders

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Negatived on division.

Motion No. 8 negatived.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): The question is on Motion No. 9. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Negatived on division.

Motion No. 9 negatived.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Motions Nos. 4 and 5 are grouped for debate and a vote on Motion No. 4 will dispose of Motion No. 5.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Maurice Foster (Algoma) moved:

Motion No. 4.

That Bill C-54 be amended in Clause 10 by adding immediately after line 35 at page 11 the following:

"(e.1) enter into an agreement with Her Majesty in Right of Canada for the collection, on behalf of the agency, of any levies or charges provided for in a promotion and research plan, that the agency is authorized to implement that are payable to the agency by persons who are engaged in the importation of a regulated product;"

[*English*]

Motion No. 5

That Bill C-54 be amended in Clause 10 by striking out line 39 at page 11 and substituting the following therefor:

"under paragraph (e) or under an agreement entered into pursuant to paragraph (e.1);"

He said: Mr. Speaker, Motion No. 4, and Motion No. 5 as consequential to No. 4, is an amendment to the bill which has been found to be in order by the Speaker. It is a strong recommendation from practically every farm group that came before the Standing Committee on Agriculture when it dealt with Bill C-54. It simply makes provision for the customs department to collect check-offs.

An example would be the Canadian Cattlemen's Association or the Canadian Pork Producers where they are collecting a check-off for promotion or for research purposes for those commodities coming into the country.

Establishing an agency to do promotion work or to do research can be quite costly for the various commodity associations. What is done in this regard in the United States is that the customs department collects the

check-off amount as products are imported into the country. Of course they pay the standard amount of the fee whatever it may be.

This is a recommendation that comes from practically every agriculture commodity group that came before the standing committee so I would strongly recommend it to the House. The officials from the department claim there is no problem in the legality of this amendment. It is just that the current Minister of Finance and the Department of Finance did not personally like this provision.

It seems to me that if that is the case and the existing government which may not be around for too long does not want to use it, well that is its choice. It can require that the Canadian Pork Producers or other farm commodity groups that establish a check-off for promotion of their commodities, or research on their commodities, collect the fees for those imports.

The key part of this whole legislation, check-off agriculture commodities, check-off legislation, is that where there is a substantial proportion of the commodities, 20 per cent, 30 per cent, or 40 per cent coming in as imports, then there can be a check-off on the imported product just as much as you have a check-off on Canadian commodities.

It is important that this technique is used in the United States. There is no reason that it cannot be used by our customs service in Canada. For many commodities, especially those in the fruits and vegetable sector which are not large volume commodities, or even for the Canadian Pork Producers it would be almost crucial to them whether or not it would be worth while establishing this legislation because if they had to set up some collection agency of their own it would not be practical. Whereas if the check-off could be carried out by the customs branch, the Department of National Revenue, then it would make it feasible.

• (1610)

I would hope that the government side would pay attention to those representations which have been made by practically every group: The Canadian Federation of Agriculture, the Pork Producers, the Canadian Horticultural Council. A number of other agencies might agree to see this amendment passed. I think it would be very beneficial to those producers and new promotion and research agencies that would be established.