

Farm Products Marketing Agencies Bill

with the question of quotas. In any case, this question was analyzed rather at length and everyone expressed his opinion on that subject.

I think I must conclude, Mr. Speaker, by proposing a motion that I consider reasonable. Perhaps I will be accused of delaying adoption of this bill. They will say that I want the bill referred to the Committee on Agriculture so that its adoption takes even more time, but that is not the question. I do this because under the Standing Orders I did not have the opportunity to move a motion at the report stage. Under those circumstances one must accept the procedure and I have an opportunity on third reading. Here is my motion.

Seconded by the hon. member for Richmond (Mr. Beaudoin) I move:

That Bill C-176 be not now read a third time, but that it be referred back to the Standing Committee on Agriculture, with instructions to amend clause 2(c) of the said bill in order to include any imported natural product of agriculture.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I regret to have to advise the hon. member that since an amendment motion has already been introduced, his motion cannot be accepted at this moment. However the hon. member may have the opportunity, later on during the debate which has barely started, of presenting his amendment motion.

Mr. Marcel Lessard (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, I feel that the House of Commons is living a rather historic moment this evening in that we have gathered here in Ottawa, this week, quite an impressive number of members from right across Canada. In view of the time of the year, between Christmas and New Year's, I believe this is a precedent, since we have worked exclusively for Canadian agriculture.

Mr. Speaker, with this bill which we all hope will become law tomorrow, we are for the first time introducing into our Canadian statutes a great principle which will be recognized nationally; this, I feel, is a new start for the Canadian agricultural industry.

Of course, this legislation is not perfect, as it has been mentioned. Indeed no legislation is perfect. However, it is a beginning and I am confident that this government or the following ones will amend it, when experience has shown that it is necessary to do so.

During the lengthy debate on this bill, we had the opportunity to hear all kinds of views, proposals, assumptions and suspicions to the effect that the government wanted to destroy the small farms and control Canadian agriculture. Indeed, this was stated a while ago by the hon. member who has just resumed his seat. However, I find it curious that a bill which is so bad has practically been approved by a member of the opposition who is precisely one of those who have been leading the debate against that bill for almost 18 months. Indeed, on April 27, 1971, when we undertook consideration of that bill, the hon. member for Crowfoot (Mr. Horner) said, as can be found on page 5294 of *Hansard*, and I quote:

● (12:50 a.m.)

As I understand it, this is basically enabling legislation or, at the utmost, permissive legislation. Nobody will be involved unless he wishes to be. This is enabling legislation which will encompass no

part of the agricultural industry unless it really wants to be encompassed.

How come, Mr. Speaker, that this official spokesman for the opposition has been able to claim all through the debate, which lasted 18 months, that this legislation is a yoke, a threat to Canadian agriculture, while he himself, if he is an expert as he claims to be—and I think that he really knows agriculture—made, on April 27, the statement that I have just quoted?

Mr. Speaker, the New Democratic party has also moved an amendment asking that consideration of the bill be postponed or that the bill be referred back to the committee for further study.

Mr. Speaker, I have personally attended every meeting of the committee and there have been many. I am not ready to support such a proposal, because nothing would be gained by referring the bill back to the committee. At any rate, the present session will end in a few hours. Obviously, the motion of the hon. member for Timiskaming (Mr. Peters) is completely out of order.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to point out that this is a permissive measure, which means that the bill authorizes groups of producers to make use of delegated federal and provincial powers to market their products. Some say that this will mark the end of the small farms. It is possible that some small farms will disappear, as thousands have disappeared over the years but not because of that bill. They will disappear for many other reasons, just as all kinds of industries and undertakings disappear and others are born every day, every month.

This bill will strengthen the whole Canadian agriculture. As for those who fear for it the detrimental effect of imports, let me reassure them and tell them that marketing agencies are the best tools to honestly control imports since imported products will be put on the market in provinces where there will be such agencies and that an imported product will have to go through that kind of agency before being put on the market if such product is controlled in the province in question. So, there is no reason for fear in that sector.

As for those who are making all kinds of interpretations regarding this bill, I will answer them that some people said that the government had retreated, that it had accepted compromises, it was said that this was bad legislation, that we had to accept scores of amendments. On the one hand, when we introduce a bill, we are told: If you do not accept amendments, you are obstinate. On the other hand, when we agree to amendments, we are accused of bringing in bad legislation and of not knowing whether we are coming or going.

People will have to make up their minds one of these days and know what they want. Or the government will present unalterable bills and then we, government members, will not agree because we want to have the right to discuss and amend proposals when we feel it is necessary. And this is precisely what has been done in the case of several other bills that were passed.

Mr. Speaker, I am convinced the measure before us is good. It is the best that we could pass in the circumstances.

It is my personal conviction that producers now facing marketing problems of eggs, poultry and related products