

*Egg Marketing Committee Report*

these recommendations, four in number, is made simply on the basis of my view as to their significance in relation to the overall subject of attempting to regulate egg production and marketing in this country. The recommendations to which I refer are as follows:

H-2 and H-4—Implementation of import/export licensing and specific identification of imported table eggs

A-6—Annual progress review by all signatories to the federal-provincial agreement

B-5—The active involvement of the Consultative Advisory Committee including meaningful participation by representatives of the non-producer segment

In the matter of recommendation H-2 dealing with the need for an import/export licensing system in accordance with acceptable provisions under the GATT agreement, it seems to me essential that CEMA have as a minimal responsibility that of maintaining appropriate records and issuing regular reports on those table eggs which are making their way on to the Canadian market having originated from sources outside Canada.

It became clear to the committee during the hearings that this is an area over which CEMA has in the past exercised no control. An example of the significance of imported table eggs to this whole question of controlling production and distribution of eggs within Canada is the recent importation of 926,000 dozen eggs from the United States for marketing to Canadian consumers during the weeks ending from December 7, 1974, through January 4, 1975. This is the equivalent of roughly 50 carloads. Bearing in mind that in the province of import, which I understand in this instance to have been Ontario, the committee is recommending that production be controlled in the case of flocks of 100 or more hens, it is quite obvious that an importation to the extent mentioned must constitute a significant factor in the overall production and distribution of eggs in the Province of Ontario.

Whether or not CEMA itself should be involved in the allocation of import/export licensing permits is something which will, no doubt, require further consideration. It does seem to me, however, that the agency would be providing inadequate reporting statistics on egg production and marketing in the months ahead were it not to make specific reference to the quantities being imported and exported month by month. In fact, Mr. Speaker, failure to take into account the quantity of table eggs coming into Canada from outside tends to render the whole scheme of production and marketing controls within Canada something of an exercise in futility.

Recommendation H-4 relates to the identification of table eggs in the supermarkets. It is my belief that Canadian consumers of agricultural products are equally as interested as those purchasing manufactured products in knowing that the product they have been offered originates outside their native land. In fact, it might be argued that consumers would be more interested in knowing they were purchasing non-Canadian eggs than they might be if it were a matter of other non-Canadian products purchased on a daily or routine basis. In my view it is entirely possible that an indirect but important effect of such identification of imported eggs could be the eventual reduction in the overall quantity of table eggs imported into Canada each year.

[Mr. Martin.]

The third recommendation on which I should like to comment is the one dealing with the involvement of the provincial ministers of agriculture.

The national plan under which CEMA derives its very existence was an agreement signed by a number of signatories, including the provincial ministers of agriculture. I would emphasize this point for the benefit of the hon. member for St. John's East who is still maintaining that sole responsibility rests with one of the 11 ministers involved, that is to say, the federal minister. The co-operation of these provincial ministers and provincial marketing boards which fall directly or indirectly under their jurisdiction is obviously of paramount necessity if the marketing scheme envisaged for handling eggs in this country is to work effectively. For this reason it is my view that provincial marketing boards should not be permitted to announce their withdrawal from CEMA in the absence of prior consultation between such provincial boards and their respective provincial ministers as well as with the federal Minister of Agriculture.

It has been noted recently that two provinces, British Columbia and Newfoundland, have announced their intention to withdraw. What has not been noted is any indication of prior discussion at senior ministerial levels prior to such announcements having been made by the heads of the two marketing boards. It is for this reason that I wish to underscore recommendation A-6 which requires at the very minimum an annual meeting of the National Farm Products Marketing Council with all signatories to the federal-provincial agreement and other directly affected parties, to review progress and achievements as well as to air areas of concern to the industry in order to avoid serious problems which could be developing.

In my view, the potential withdrawal of any one of the provinces from the national marketing scheme is indeed a most serious problem. All aspects should be carefully considered and discussed at a national meeting prior to any option for withdrawal being exercised or even announced in an official way.

The last point to which I wish to address my remarks this evening is recommendation B-5. This is the recommendation that endorses the concept of involving what I might refer to as the other side of the equation in the many consultations that must obviously form part and parcel of CEMA's operations. It became obvious to members of the committee during the recent hearings that both CEMA and the various regulatory bodies within the provinces are strictly producer oriented. Yet it is clear that the production and consumption of eggs in Canada is of as much concern to the consumer element of the general public as it is to the producer element.

Failure to accede to this concept of involving non-producer elements of the public in at least an advisory capacity will lead in the long run to further credibility gaps in the operation of the egg production and marketing scheme. Recommendation B-5 attempts to accomplish this goal without at the same time endeavouring to control the decision making ability of the CEMA organization. It does this by proposing an effective and meaningful role for the Consultative Advisory Committee that was envisaged in the original federal-provincial agreement. The problem to