

On the other hand, evidence was given to the Committee by the legal advisers to the National Farm Products Marketing Council that unilateral action on the part of the Minister or the Agency was not possible.

The Committee, however, notes that the arbitrary intervention of either the Minister or the Agency to adjust the terms of the agreement could have serious adverse effects upon "the PLAN" itself. Such an adjustment to "the PLAN" should, of necessity, be worked out on a co-operative basis with all the parties concerned.

Background Respecting the Scope of the Committee's Inquiry

The Committee notes that the provincial Ministers of Agriculture met for the purpose of discussing the operations of CEMA and brought forward a report of recommendations on November 25, 1974.

Your Committee would have liked to have had the opportunity to call the Ministers of Agriculture before it to discuss the contents of their report particularly in light of the fact that their report was not unanimous. This was impossible because of the tight time frame under which the Committee operated.

The Committee had before it for its consideration, the auditors' reports. However, the Committee would have liked to have heard evidence directly from CEMA's auditors in connection with the problems they uncovered as well as any recommendations they propose for their resolution. In addition we would have liked to have had a further meeting with the B.C. Marketing Board in respect to their proposed withdrawal from CEMA. These actions were impossible in light of the Committee's deadline of December 16, 1974.

Furthermore, it is important to note that in light of the expiry of the Committee's mandate on December 16, 1974 it will be impossible for the Committee, itself, to perform any follow-up functions respecting its recommendations. The Committee therefore makes a fundamental recommendation respecting the over-all operations of egg marketing in Canada, that it is essential that the National Farm Products Marketing Council conduct a review of the new revised operations of CEMA no later than the end of March, 1975 and that it make a report to the Minister of Agriculture and to the public in respect to its findings and any possible subsequent recommendations for the improvement of egg marketing in Canada.

It is further suggested that the Minister of Agriculture, after consideration of this report, consider the advisability of referring the report to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Agriculture for consideration and report thereon.

It is felt by the Committee that the present enquiry and the public discussions surrounding it would, if continued, delay the effective implementation of the recommendations of this report. It is believed that any delay in this report would have an adverse effect upon CEMA and its operations by compounding their difficulties rather than assisting them in their resolution.

Background Respecting Consumer Interest

The Committee, in making its observations and recommendations, was constantly aware of the responsibility under the relevant legislation of the National Farm Products Marketing Council and CEMA as well as the provincial boards, to assure that the interests of the producer and consumer are both protected.

The Committee feels it is important to highlight some of the points made which have a direct bearing on the consumer interest.

In observation C-1, the Committee recognizes the need for public hearings by the National Farm Products Marketing Council. Our recommendation in A-5, proposes public hearings be held from time to time.

In our observation in D-2, respecting the Consultative Council of CEMA, we specifically criticize the lack of meaningful involvement of the consumer in the affairs of CEMA and recommend in B-5 methods to resolve this difficulty.

In observation D-20, the Committee expresses its concern to possible barriers to interprovincial trade which could adversely affect the consumer and recommends that any such barriers be eliminated through its recommendation B-11.

In order to bring to bear on the deliberations of the National Farm Products Marketing Council, an outside view, the Committee recommends in A-2, the appointment of three (3) new members to the Council. The Committee further recommends in A-3 and 4, that the Council adopt a policy of public accountability.

In recommendation B-1, the Committee recommends appointment of two (2) new federal agency members to bring a national over-view to their deliberations which we feel would be in the interests of the producers as well as the public generally.

In recommendation B-9, the Committee recommends that CEMA give further consideration to providing eggs at a special price to the disadvantaged.

In recommendation C-11, the Committee recommends a code-dating system for shell eggs to guarantee fresh eggs on the table market.

In recommendation D-3, which deals with the enforcement of quotas, we believe that it is in the consumer interest that circumvention of the system be eliminated.

In recommendation E-1 and 2, the Committee recognizes the need to establish a proper cost of production and pricing policy which would be open to public scrutiny.

In recommendation H-4, the Committee proposes an identification system for imported eggs to insure that the consumer will be aware of the country of origin of products purchased.