

concept. When this legislation was introduced it received a great deal of approval in the provinces of Ontario, Quebec, British Columbia and other regions of Canada where marketing agencies are operative. Once this matter was brought before Parliament with the concept that the federal government would enter the field, the idea began to percolate in the agricultural communities of Canada. As a result, a great deal of concern has developed in these communities.

Let me point out why I feel there has been tremendous concern and an abrupt change in attitude on the part of many toward this bill in its present form. In the production of any commodity there is not, and never will be, total support for a marketing scheme. Some people feel such a scheme is not in the interests of the primary producer. Perhaps the majority feel that it is in their interests. As a result, we have in every province, region and community a nucleus of people who believe in free enterprise and that mandatory marketing legislation is not in the common interest.

Let us also consider what is happening in respect of this legislation. Producers in Ontario and other regions of Canada are concerned about the government bringing in an omnibus bill. The bill before us is such a bill. Its concept is based on the fact that all agricultural products in all areas of Canada should be covered. The bill itself speaks not only of primary products but any portion or any manufactured part of a primary product. This is certainly an omnibus concept.

The minister said in his speech that nowhere does this bill indicate there should be production control. I cannot agree with his interpretation. Let me put on record why the majority of producers in Canada cannot agree with this assertion. Over and over again the minister and this government have stated that the bill is patterned on provincial legislation which gives production control. They have pointed to the Canadian Wheat Board and the National Dairy Council as prime examples of how this concept can work. Anyone who is familiar with agriculture knows that the Canadian Wheat Board and the National Dairy Council are based on the concept of production control and supply management. For the government to suggest now that nowhere implicit in this bill is such a provision is, to say the least, misleading.

Let us consider what has happened in respect of the Dairy Commission. It was set up to protect dairy interests in Canada. We find that small enterprises have been forced out and that it is almost impossible for new farmers to get into this business. An apt description of what is taking place as a result of such legislation is that large producers are placed in a comfortable position, protected against encroachment by government regulation. Another grave concern in Ontario relates to the provision in this bill which makes it possible for the government to delegate provincial authority to national marketing agencies and the federal authority. It is expected that the two working together in harmony and within the democratic process will bring about the hoped-for adjustments. But this is immediately eroded by the fact that the minister in his explanation left the impression that the provincial authority is delegated only perhaps by negotiation and

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that it is within the purview of the provinces to opt out of the measure entirely or on a commodity by commodity basis. I think this is a major weakness.

• (5:20 p.m.)

The second major weakness is that no import control is inherent in this legislation. It is all very well for the minister to say we do not need it in legislation of this type because it is inherent in other legislation which is available to the government and that therefore there would be duplication. In respect of the practical application of marketing schemes already in existence in Canada, we see that every time an application is made to the government for import control either it is not granted or the delay is of such a nature that it becomes almost impossible to make a profitable sale of the commodity in question.

A prime example of this arose in the House yesterday when the hon. member for British Columbia, a proponent of this bill, criticized his own government because there was no import control on strawberries coming into his province. This shows why import control is absolutely necessary. I join with my colleague in the allegation that this bill will not, and cannot, solve the problem of inter-provincial trade and the restrictions we now face, because the only tool it has is negotiation. As the minister has indicated, it will provide a forum for negotiation of differences. There is no legal way under Bill C-176 in which there can be a determination or real assessment of the problem facing the provinces. So I agree with my colleague that the only way in which this matter can be solved is by reference to the Supreme Court. I agree with him that a proper assessment of Bill C-176 is not possible until we know the decision of the Supreme Court, because if the decision should be what we expect it to be, then the terms and provisions set out in this bill will not be applicable.

Another matter which is very upsetting to me and to others who are familiar with the workings of marketing agencies and the way in which they provide aid to primary producers is that during the committee hearings, while listening to the government's defence of its own bill it became readily discernible that the government is more concerned about control over agriculture than with providing a democratic method of supply-marketing in a regular fashion.

I think we will find that the major difference between this measure and a provincial measure is that there is not spelled out in this bill the basis for the success of such schemes in the provincial field. It is all very well for the minister to state that there will be a democratic process and that the majority of the primary producers of any commodity will have to solicit the government in order to be placed under the terms of the legislation, but that is only half the story because the reverse is not equally true. If the primary producers should find that rather than being of benefit to their industry it is a detriment, then there is no provision for a plebescite or any other means of adopting a negative approach to the bill so that such an agency could be disbanded. This is a basic weakness as between the federal and provincial legislation.