

*Farm Products Marketing Agencies Bill*

as it now stands is reasonable. I begin by saying that I was pleased to see that the government changed the requirements for representation on the council. The council is to consist of—

—three and not more than nine members, at least 50 per cent of whom shall be primary producers—

Possibly that could have been worded to make them almost all primary producers. The government has made some change in that the agencies as well have a majority of primary producers on the board. However, may I suggest that the government consider some additional changes to the agencies. Possibly the agency should be representative of the primary producers in the sense that they are elected by the primary producers affected by the particular agency in question. I would also suggest that the primary producers who become members of the agency have the right to bargain for price supports and subsidies to their programs when they find that prices are inadequate. As the elected representative of the producers, this agency should be allowed to set minimum and maximum prices, assuming that there can be minimum and maximum prices.

The Conservative amendments do not take into consideration that this is permissive legislation which allows the producers themselves to decide whether they wish to come within its terms. I refer to the bill which in section 7(2) provides:

The council, in reporting to the minister under subsection (1), shall not recommend the establishment of an agency in respect of a farm product or farm products or the broadening of the authority of an existing agency by vesting it with powers in relation to a farm product or farm products unless it is satisfied that a majority of the producers of the farm product or of each of the farm products in Canada or in the region of Canada to which the recommendation relates is in favour of such action.

If producers of certain commodities are not inclined toward the concept of orderly marketing, they have the option of deciding among themselves not to become involved. There are other areas of this bill that could be improved in order to make it more workable. There is, for example, the whole question of the establishment of quotas. We have seen the results of the operation of the Canadian Dairy Commission in terms of the quotas that dairy producers received and the amount of production allowed. In light of that experience, the government should consider changing this legislation in order that we may have, in the words of the amendment proposed by the hon. member for Saskatoon-Biggar (Mr. Gleave):

A marketing plan to the extent that it allocates any production or marketing quota to any area of Canada, shall allocate that quota on the basis of the production from that area in relation to the total production of Canada over a period of five years immediately preceding the effective date of the marketing plan. In allocating additional quotas for anticipated growth of market demand, the marketing agency shall be guided by the principle of comparative advantage of production.

In other words, Mr. Speaker, it is not to deter a particular area or region from the quotas it deserves. It is, in fact, a matter in which each area is allowed its fair and just share of the quotas under that particular product. There is also the question of the manner in which the farmer may appeal if he is not satisfied with the way the agency is handling his particular quota. The council shall make

[Mr. Knight.]

such inquiries and take such action within its powers as it deems appropriate in relation to any complaints received by it from any person who is directly affected by the operations of an agency and that relate to the operations of such agency.

● (8:50 p.m.)

I believe that particular manner of appeal in this legislation could be strengthened by the use of the amendment suggested by the hon. member from Fraser Valley. There should be every option available to the farmer to appeal to the agencies of the council in terms of the manner in which his particular products are being handled. I believe there should be a tightening of the means of appeal within this legislation.

There is another area which, if improved, would make the amendment suggested by Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition somewhat more redundant than it is; that is, if the government would consider the question of promotion in respect of selling farm products, as suggested at page 17 of the bill, to which I should like to refer for a moment, where it states that an agency may "undertake to advertise and promote and do research into new markets for the establishment of greater sales." The hon. member for Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition just referred to this. The government is introducing a clause which deals with promotion of farm products and increasing their sale, I suppose especially in the export market. Then at page 19 we find this provision in clause 27:

Subject to subsection (1) of section 28, an agency shall conduct its operations on a self-sustaining financial basis without appropriations therefor by Parliament.

The only appropriation is a grant from the Minister of Agriculture in order to get the agency started. I suggest to the government that if it wants to improve this legislation so as not to face amendments such as those introduced by Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition, it should take into consideration the fact that more funds should be available to the agencies in terms of grants from the government in order that those agencies may do the proper kind of research to ensure that all products have an opportunity to be sold in foreign markets.

We in the New Democratic Party, for a considerable length of time in history have been essentially in favour of orderly marketing. We still take this position. I suppose the definition of "orderly marketing" over the years has somewhat changed in terms of its effect upon the primary producer. Some of the changes I have recommended to the government in terms of this legislation would do a better job of ensuring that there is real orderly marketing.

In conclusion, I suggest there are approximately three areas in which this legislation could be improved. First of all, the bill should relate market-sharing quotas to historic production records. It should strengthen the farmer's bargaining power in terms of prices, and it should improve the farmer's appeal procedures. I suppose the dilemma we face in this party in terms of the legislation is that we have a government which is introducing legislation dealing with orderly marketing and we have before us its record in terms of agricultural policies. It is not a question of opposing orderly marketing but of whether or not we can trust the Liberal Party to handle orderly marketing.