

*Farm Products Marketing Agencies Bill*

and achieving equal economic opportunities throughout the land.

If such action is not taken, marketing conflicts will continue to emerge even after Bill C-176 has been passed. There will still be pilgrimages of Eastern farmers to Ottawa to make representations to the government, seeking to obtain fair treatment, even though such representations, according to the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Lessard), are tantamount to intimidation manœuvres which the government does not fear.

After parading on several occasions in recent years before federal ministers and various officials and failing to convince ministers of the validity of producers' grievances, the leaders of producers' unions and farmers' organizations then decided, as I was just saying, to make massive representations. Those people have to spend money—of which they have too little as it is—in order to come and make representations; but in face of need, in face of their leaders' insistence on their taking the trouble to travel in order to try and make their point, they still accept to make this sacrifice. In other words, they go back thinking that the ministers listened to them but were not determined to act upon their valid grievances. Each of them then goes home thinking that the federal government does not act and is not fair to them.

For this reason we see groups which aim at regionalizing Canada spring up across the country, be it in eastern, western, or central Canada. Having promoted this concept, they still fail to improve the situation. So we see separatist movements being born everywhere, and I am afraid that unless the situation is improved at the roots—at the economic level—far from improving, it will go on worsening.

Mr. Speaker, in the face of all those situations, I am extremely upset and I appeal to all hon. members. I am aware that my appeal may mean nothing, but in any event allow me to express at least one wish, as this is the last day of the year and I think we are going to use it properly. At the rate at which we are going we will be fit to start the year 1972 on the right foot. Anyway, here is my wish: even if Liberal members boast about exerting pressure within their party, the fact remains that they fail to bring about many changes in this government's grain policy. In fact, if I may refer to a government member who said that he barks very loud inside his party, a producer once said quite rightly that he could not bark any farther than the leash which restrained him. I thought it was a marvelous remark, Mr. Speaker.

• (12:40 a.m.)

If we take into account the events that for several years have taken place in this House, we find that such comments have been very often made. This is why I suggest that the institution wherein we are gathered tonight is a very special place for the people's representatives because they can express opinions and make effective representations.

Finally, I believe that the proceedings in the House of Commons and the official positions that are defined are the best means of exerting pressure, and I think that when the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion (Mr. Marchand) met with the producers of Quebec last week and

[Mr. Lambert (Bellechasse)]

apologized for leaving the delegation, he rightly stated that he had been elected to the House of Commons to work and that it was his duty to be there. I also agree with this opinion of the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion.

I still believe that Parliament is the most suitable public place for an elected representative to effectively defend the people's interests be they at the farm producers' or the Canadian consumers' levels.

The bill—and it is an important aspect—should provide that when it is necessary for Canada to import a designated farm product, this product be marketed by marketing agencies as would be a farm product produced in Canada. This procedure is not new because it is already implemented in regard to alcoholic beverages. We all know that imported alcoholic beverages are marketed in Canada through provincial liquor boards and nobody complains. This would not entail any reprisals against any country because they would be domestic boards, and that has nothing to do with external policy.

The minister already said that there are other bodies responsible for issuing import permits. I admit it but that is beside the point. We have to include in the bill a provision to the effect that when a farm product is imported with a permit that product be marketed through marketing agencies in that category. I think we will have very serious problems and producers in Canada will have to fight competition on the domestic market if importers sometimes unknown to the public try above all to make money even if it should be detrimental to the producers in Canada.

A moment ago the hon. member for Essex (Mr. Whelan) emphasized this and he was right when he said that producers in Canada will sometimes have to suffer from price setting which will not in fact take into account the production cost because of uncontrolled imports which could bring about a decrease in the prices which should benefit the producers in Canada. Such a policy would not be advantageous to farm producers in Canada.

This is why I ask that any imported natural farm product be subject to the same marketing rules which apply to Canadian products, and I do so because clause 3 of this bill is seriously deficient. In fact, although it says that the majority of the members of the National Marketing Council will be primary producers, the fact still remains that they will be designated by the government. So they will be political appointees and I blame the government for not allowing the farm organizations concerned to designate their representatives to this council, and I think that this might place agriculture under the dependence of the federal government.

This is why earlier, through an amendment at the report stage, if I may point this out, Mr. Speaker, an appeal was made to the government for the officers that will manage these agencies to be mostly farmers and producers, so that they will have this additional protection which they absolutely need.

Clause 19 leaves the government entirely free to appoint the members of marketing agencies. Again, I fear that those directly concerned, that is, the producers, will not have an opportunity to control the marketing of their own production. If I had had time, I should have liked to deal