

Dairylea

Clyde Rutherford
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This thing we call "bloc voting" is nothing more or less than the kind of representative voting that takes place in government, churches, school boards, corporations, and other business and social institutions all over the nation. It is a mystery to me why a bill to curtail representative voting is being championed by a farm organization which makes policy decisions by board of directors action as a matter of routine.

I'm sure that this sponsoring organization will say that it goes to the grass roots for all of its policies. Well, so do the dairy cooperatives. We are structured into locals, districts, very often subdistricts. We have delegates elected by members. We have resolution committees who receive members' proposals. We hold annual meetings at which delegates vote on all major policy matters. And so on.

From this structure, we have established policies relative to milk promotion, marketing orders, pricing, and other industry issues. As these matters require decisions, the Board of Directors is empowered to act on them. And if, as board members, they don't represent the will of a majority of members, then the members can throw the rascals out at the next election.

The Pennsylvania legislature in 1961 passed P.L. 1541, No. 657 which required that in voting on state marketing programs, co-ops must inform members ahead of time about what position is being taken. Members have the right to vote differently from their co-op and their vote would then be

deducted from the total vote of the co-op.

This is a tedious and cumbersome attempt to circumvent the representative voting that should be accepted as the proper function of a cooperative. Nevertheless, it was voted into law. Now, this weakened version of representative voting is to be eliminated altogether and replaced by a law which torbids representative voting by co-ops.

And so we come full circle to where the divide and conquer experts can again skillfully play on a minority of farmers and thereby exert control — in this case, control over the State's marketing programs.

Without the ability to use representative voting, it is easily predictable that we could wind up before every referendum in a war of propaganda which could be won by the most aggressive yet irresponsible minority group. It is far easier to rally support for a catchy slogan than it is for a well thought out, unsensational but constructive program.

Representative voting — bloc voting if you prefer to call it that — protects producers from rule by militant but often misguided minorities. It relieves producers of the almost impossible task of operating a farm and at the same time following in intimate detail the complications of commodity economics. It guarantees that voting on issues will be by a substantial part of the affected commodity group, and it is totally in harmony with the democratic processes which prevail in this country.

I urge the Legislature, before striking a blow against representative voting, to remember the statement by Supreme Court Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes in 1915. In a case

My name is Barbara Woods. My husband, children and I operate a dairy farm in Franklin County. We're milking 60 head of Holsteins.

My husband and I belong to Pennsylvania Farmers Association and Pennsylvania Farmers Union. We are past members of Eastern Milk Producers Co-op and belong to several other agricultural cooperatives. I am a member of the Franklin County Board of the Penn State Extension.

I know where my county stands on marketing programs. We're not against marketing programs, but we don't want them forced.

Every producer should have the right to vote or not vote. Should I choose not to vote, I blame only myself for whatever happens. And I can do something about it by use of my vote on the next referendum.

When a cooperative is allowed to block vote for its membership, my control power is virtually lost. That vote is cast by a board of

involving a question of voting rights, he said: "Where the rule of conduct applies to more than a few people, it is impracticable that everyone should have a direct voice in the adoption. The Constitution does not require all public acts to be done in town meeting or an assembly of the whole. Their rights are protected in the only way that they can be in a complex society, by their power, immediate or remote, over those who make the rule. There must be a limit to individual agreement in such matters if government is to go on..."

I urge the Legislature not to approve House Bill 767.

Ag speaks out on pros and cons of

Franklin Dairy Producer

thousands. My dollar investment is very important.

The accountability of a marketing program should be measurable. If, within three years, the marketing program is not showing returns for its investment, a referendum should be called. I'm sure Pepsi doesn't run promotion or advertising programs three years before pulling it if it isn't productive. If things are going well with the program, it will be continued. I feel a three year recall will strengthen the marketing program by making it more accountable to the producer.

In closing, I strongly feel that all of the changes offered to the Agriculture Act are extremely beneficial to the producers. If cooperatives are truly representative of their producers — and if farm organizations are truly representative of their membership — passage of House Bill 767 will only stand to strengthen their position because it is truly the position of the producer.

However, if that position is not truly reflective of the producers position and House Bill 767 is defeated, you have given away the producers right to vote and his right to fair representation.

Either way you vote on House Bill 767, the cooperatives win. The co-op will block that way or the producer will vote the way the co-op would have. However, if they do not represent their producers, and they very well may not, your opposing vote will cost producers their vote.

Please support House Bill 767. You have nothing to lose. The producer does.

Inter-State

My name is Daniel L. Mar am a dairy farmer from Mant Lancaster County and president of Inter-State Producers' Cooperative, Industrial Highway, Southam, Inter-State represents over Pennsylvania dairy farms over 3,300 dairymen in the M Atlantic Region.

As I understand the issue fa us, the proposal is to eliminat procedure whereby coopera can collectively represent members through the so-c "bloc vote" procedure. proposal would only permit dividual voting and would any cooperative the represent right which is given all corp Boards and Legislatures.

Dairy cooperatives consider privilege of "bloc voting" as a tool to support the federal state marketing programs w assist the industry cooperatives in producing marketing an adequate suppl pure and wholesome milk al times.

The application of "bloc vot is an extension of the democ process of representative vo from the farmers to their ele Board members. As stated ear this is the essence of cooperative institutions government bodies. There is sound or logical reasoning w would lead one to deny procedure to-cooperative deci making.

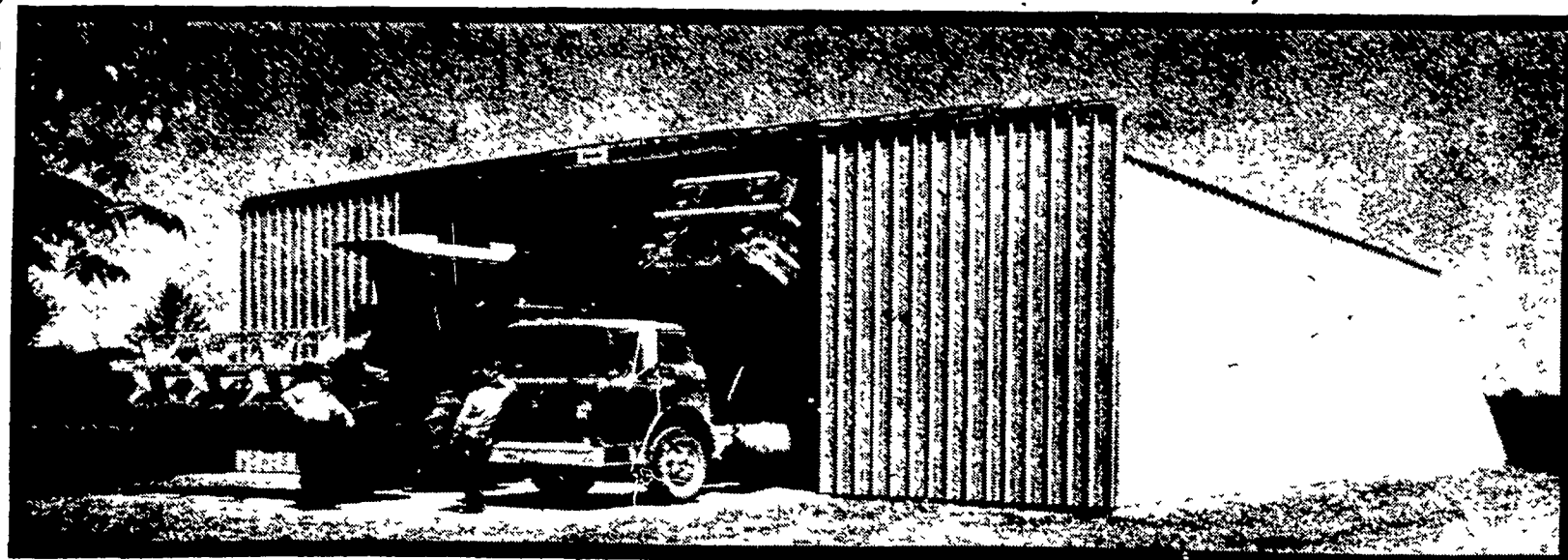
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