

*Farm Products Marketing Agencies Bill*

say something on this amendment since I represent a riding in which there is a great deal of livestock production. At the same time it is an area of the country that has had a special experience in the field of marketing legislation inasmuch as the B.C. tree fruit industry has come under marketing legislation for a period of 30 or 35 years.

During that time the people in my area of the country have learned a great deal about marketing legislation. The implementation of this legislation has not always been completely successful but it has served to create an orderly condition of marketing which, in general and by and large, has been beneficial to the fruit growers of British Columbia.

I believe it has also been beneficial to the consumers of Canada in that it has placed before them a high quality product offered under the best of conditions. This product has been marketed under attractive conditions all over Canada and around the world because of the ability to arrange orderly marketing in a way in which individual producers could never do.

However, I have been concerned about the inclusion of livestock in this bill because many livestock producers in my area have expressed their concern to me. After studying the provisions of the bill it has become obvious to me that there need be no real concern. I find it very difficult to conceive of a situation in which livestock producers would be forced into some kind of a marketing scheme which they did not want.

There are too many steps and too many procedures along the way which must be followed in order to make it possible for any group of producers in Canada to force their opinions upon all the producers in Canada. When we examine the steps which must be pursued, such as the hearings, the votes, the provincial approval, the approval of the board and parliamentary approval, I believe it is impossible to conceive of all those steps having been gone through with any sizeable number of producers being opposed to inclusion under the provisions of the bill which apply to livestock and other commodities which might at some time in the future come under these provisions.

I am a little concerned that perhaps the steps and the controls are so rigid that when the producers of some commodity are anxious to be brought under the provisions of the bill the proceedings may be so cumbersome that it may be impossible for them to go through all these lengthy proceedings in time to obtain benefits under the bill. So I am satisfied that the livestock producers of Canada and of my region are very amply protected for that reason, and I believe I can in clear conscience support the bill, particularly as it is amended at the present time.

There has been some suggestion during the course of this debate that this bill would not cure all the farm problems in Canada. I would certainly be the first to say that is true. There is no one bill that would cure all the farm problems in Canada. I want to say categorically, however, that I deny the allegation made in this House during the course of this debate that it is a policy of this government to force people off their farms. That has been said over and over again and I want to say that it is not true.

It is the policy of this government to assist the farmers to stay on their farms and to provide some assistance to them if they should be forced because of economic conditions to leave. But through such measures as farm credit insurance, crop insurance and many other forms of assistance and the now recently announced programs of the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Olson), an effort has been made to make it possible for these people to stay home. Despite all these programs I am concerned that there are still economic conditions which exist here in Canada and around the world pertaining to agriculture which make it difficult for small farmers to stay on their farms.

I should like to see consideration given at some time in the near future to the possibility of establishing something that we have spoken of from time to time, namely a guaranteed annual income in the field of small farms in Canada. Small farms do represent a valuable social unit. They provide a valuable place in life for people who do not want to be forced to adopt city life. I sympathize with hon. members on all sides of the House who have made statements to the effect that many small farmers, because of economic conditions, are being forced into the cities against their will.

Very often, because of age or lack of training, many of these people who have been involved in farming are forced on to the welfare rolls. For this reason I believe it is reasonable to suggest that in respect of these farmers it would be more economic and socially desirable to provide them with some form of guaranteed annual income. It is far better to keep these people on the farms with a small guaranteed income, plus what they may be able to obtain from their farms, so they can lead the kind of life they want to lead. Perhaps it would not be possible for them to live as well financially as their counterparts in the cities, but they would live as well socially. They would have the satisfaction of leading the kind of life they had been accustomed to rather than having to move to the cities. So I should like to propose to the Minister of Agriculture and to the government that some kind of a guaranteed annual income be considered for people on small farms whose farm units are not economic. Because of the economic benefits available to farmers and people in rural areas from the food they produce, and because other costs may be lower, I suggest these farmers could be aided with a comparatively small amount of financial assistance which would make it possible for them to stay on the farms.

• (4:20 p.m.)

I hesitate to suggest a particular amount but I mention the figure of \$3,000 a year as a basic income for them. I suggest that with such assistance many more small farmers of Canada might be able to stay in the rural setting which they like so much. I suggest that this would be a valuable thing for Canada because of the social advantage in having the rural communities in Canada populated by people who want to be there.

I find it possible to support this bill, particularly with the new amendments, in so far as it affects the livestock industry. I am most happy to support it in the way it is amended. I am satisfied that the livestock producers of Canada are protected in the way that they have indicated they want protection. I am satisfied that the livestock producers in my constituency will not be forced into a