

*Agricultural Stabilization Act*

listen. I do not know everything about agriculture, so all I can do is listen and then try to do something based on what I have learned. Let not the minister be known as a minister who talked and never did anything new and creative.

The minister has a great opportunity to get rid of one phrase that his speechwriters use, "supply management". This is a great subject of contention in the world today. The world needs food, so what we must do is expand. Supply management is the tool of the economist, the adviser to governments, who wants to restrict production. That is the difference.

Supply management started in Europe and was brought to North America in 1960. We, as a government in Canada, in 1960 resisted it and we continued to expand. The United States accepted it in 1960, and look at the disaster it was to their farmers. It got into this country in 1969 through that awful agricultural task force report which recommended that two out of every three farmers should get off their farms. It recommended that we reduce the acreage sown by wheat farmers by half; it recommended that the farmers be sent to the cities. It was called the small farms program.

Worst of all, this government, of which the minister was part—he sat on the back benches in those days—brought in legislation to restrict agriculture. It succumbed to the false doctrine of supply management. It succumbed to the doctrine of restricting the production of the farmer. It succumbed to the doctrine of taking farmers out of production and sending them off to the ghettos in the cities.

I suggest the minister should get away from all this. I know he said he did not belong to the government when all these things happened, and he is right. But he now has the awful task of proving that he does not belong there. Those of us who know nothing about agriculture have discovered one thing; we have been at the wrong end of the stick. I know it is said that in a full barrel of rat manure you will rarely find a good kernel of wheat. To put it in very blunt terms, if the minister stays around with the same bunch of fellows who did these awful things to us, I say he will not be a good kernel of wheat for very long either. That is the gut issue.

What the minister has to do is to turn his driving strength and power, with the faith of the farmers behind him, in the direction of selling organizations. We know the egg situation has been in a mess. Let us put the egg industry in the hands of a group of people who will not try to play God. Let us set up a selling organization for eggs. If people do not need protein, then I do not know what else they need. I do not care what the product is; almost all agricultural products can be sold in some form or another. Ideas have been floating around Ottawa all of the years I have been here.

The only market that the tobacco growers have is controlled by three major companies, and they decide what they are going to pay. Of course, they play games with the clock, but in practice they are the only three customers. With a strong minister and a selling board for tobacco we will be able to sell this product to Europe, pay the 25 per cent tariff, and still give the people of Europe the chance to smoke a mild cigar at half the price. We should slash away at this sort of market. The tobacco growers of south-

western Ontario themselves cannot do it. The people of Europe who smoke tobacco will be able to smoke twice as much at half the price, and go to the grave much faster. That is not our business, but I say selling is the key.

Let me talk about beef for a few moments. The amount of beef produced in the United States and Canada in 1974, and expected to be produced in 1975, is such that these two great agricultural countries do not produce sufficient beef to feed their own people. That just indicates how the industry can be mucked up. Their two governments have managed to do that. It seems to me that we are putting everything today into the hands of a group of advisers, and the only thing they know is how to restrict and control the farmers. They think all control should be in the hands of a group of technocrats, civil servants, or whatever you call them and that these people know better what to do than anybody else. They think they know when to plant, when to harvest, when to sell; they control the product from first to last.

In 1971 Liberals and NDP members supported the national marketing legislation. Thank God no member of the Conservative party did so, because all it was designed to do was to restrict the production of farmers, to control their activities from beginning to end, even right through the business cycle. We only accepted the legislation in so far as it applied to eggs and poultry. If the government had had its way, it would have applied to every agricultural product, but thanks to some P.C. members of the House the government was stopped at that time. I was not here, so I cannot take credit for that.

The doctrine of supply management and of restriction is obsolete today in a world where demand goes up at the rate of nearly 4 per cent a year and productivity increases at the rate of only 3 per cent. I am using round figures; the actual figures are 3.9 per cent and 2.7 per cent, but let me call it 3 per cent and 4 per cent a year.

● (2050)

Every year we drop behind to the extent of 500 million bushels in cereals which the world needs, and drop behind in respect of red meat products, and yet we have all these governments throughout the world that are dominated by a group of economists who believe in running the show. Thank heavens there are a few in each country who differ. Surely the famine we have seen in the last five or six years in the middle belt of the world, and the awful scenes we have witnessed on our television sets, should strike home so that we will not be content to say that we will just support a world food bank under the United Nations.

The United States and Canada should stop this silly fighting and go out and meet the needs of these people. These people do not have the money. We should buy these products and sell them all over the world. This is being done by the Japanese, and by one or two Canadian and United States concerns today. We should have this concept of international trading companies. The minister should be listening to this.

I, for one, am not prepared to write off the minister. I think his heart is in the right place, but I ask him to please omit all this talk and give us the action farmers expect. Otherwise we will all be dead. I again make the plea I made at the beginning. Hopefully all my remarks will be