

Farm Products Marketing Agencies Bill

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Béchard): The hon. member for Prince Edward-Hastings (Mr. Hees).

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Hon. George Hees (Prince Edward-Hastings): Mr. Speaker, if the hounds will stop baying I will get on with my speech. The eloquence and logic of the hon. members who have already dealt with this bill, such as the hon. member for Peace River (Mr. Baldwin), the hon. member for Swift Current-Maple Creek (Mr. McIntosh), the hon. member for Crowfoot (Mr. Horner) and others on the opposition side have made it possible for me to make tonight one of the shortest speeches on record.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hees: I rise simply to add my voice to those that have already been raised in this debate and to urge the government to make a very important change in this legislation, one that will turn bad legislation into good. The hon. member for Fraser Valley East (Mr. Pringle), who has just resumed his seat, spoke well and referred to two or three mistakes in this bill. One of the mistakes to which he referred and which he did not explain refers to what I am going to talk about tonight and is what the members of the opposition have been talking about in their speeches. As a man of knowledge in this field, the hon. member knows what he is talking about. He has told the minister that some very important changes ought to be made in the bill, and this is why I intend to take a few minutes of the time of the House tonight.

As we all know, Bill C-197 will establish a National Farm Products Marketing Council and national marketing agencies for farm products. We of the official opposition are in favour of the principle of establishing these bodies, because it has been found through practice that they are needed to stabilize the marketing and prices of farm products, particularly when these farm products are sold interprovincially and in export markets. Having said that, I state emphatically that what the members of the official opposition object to very strenuously is the government's proposal completely to take over the control of the pricing and marketing of these products by appointing all of the directors to this council and making the appointments to the agencies. We believe, and believe very firmly, as does the hon. member for Fraser Valley East, that the producers of farm products are best fitted to direct marketing and pricing

policies relating to the products that they produce. They are the ones who should be the directors of the council and appointed to these marketing agencies.

We of the official opposition are convinced that the farmers want more orderly marketing and pricing of their products so they can receive a better return for the financial outlay that they make every year, and for the very considerable effort that they put into their farming operations. But they do not want state control of these operations. They want to protect their freedom to direct these operations by being represented by producers of their products on the boards of the council and the marketing agencies.

• (9:40 p.m.)

That is the reason we oppose the government's proposal to appoint all the directors to the council and the agencies. Everybody in this House knows perfectly well that when the government appoints these members, from the chairman down, to this council and these agencies, the chairman and members will become puppets of this government. They will be paid by the government and they will snap to attention when the government cracks the whip. They will do exactly what the government wishes. The minister knows this. This is dictatorial legislation of a kind which we do not intend to pass in this House. We intend to fight it right down the line.

The hon. member for Fraser Valley East said there were a few little changes which ought to be made. There are fundamental changes in the legislation which we demand be made and which the farmers demand be made so that dictatorial legislation is not passed in this House. This is the reason I have taken a few minutes to speak in this debate. With the members of my party, I strongly urge that this government appoint the chairman and members of the council and agencies from the ranks of the producers of the products concerned so that this can be useful, good, practical legislation that will be for the benefit of the producers of the products concerned.

Mr. D. R. Gundlock (Lethbridge): Mr. Speaker and members of this House, there has been much talk about this bill.

An hon. Member: Too much.

Mr. Gundlock: As someone says, there has been too much. I should like to start by mentioning what will happen if the bill should pass. We in this party expect that it will not