

Farm Products Marketing Agencies Bill

When has the federal government taken into account the decisions or the representations of a province? What rulings have been made following investigations conducted throughout Canada since 1950? Was the inquiry made by hon. members and senators throughout the country and on which the joint committee reported in 1967 followed up? We are still waiting for the decisions which should have been made after this famous report.

We are also waiting for the report of the Committee on Agriculture, which toured the country last year, including Toronto and eastern Canada, going through Quebec in order to meet representatives from the CFU, the Coopérative fédérée and milk producers.

We all know that this famous report has been tabled, but we are still looking for it in the Clerk's desk because we think that the report was actually hidden so that we could not speak about it for the time being.

The protection granted during the past years has simply been reduced. You will remember that the government paid rather important subsidies. You will recall also that the CFU and all the organizations of this sort in eastern Canada asked not only that these subsidies should still be granted, but that they should be increased according to the rise in the cost of living, that is to say by 5 or 6 per cent each year. However, these recommendations were simply ignored. The decision of a few persons was abided by and the dairy producers of the province of Quebec were penalized by 8 per cent if one takes into account the money they have lost. However, the associations made these recommendations quite voluntarily. It is probably for this reason they have not been considered.

Today, we are getting ready to establish another board, another council to which will assuredly be appointed the party's friends, some of them have perhaps failed under the present economic system while others could hardly earn their own living otherwise, but they will get salaries of around \$20,000 or \$25,000 a year. This will be an excellent muzzle which will keep them from recommending whatever farmers demand and refrain from making public the objectives already decided upon by another team. This is most unfortunate. I was not wrong when I said it, because if one considers the present situation, one realizes what is happening in Canada today.

[Mr. Godin.]

Bill C-197 is a piece of legislation which simply makes agriculture dependent on the State.

In clause 3, for instance, we see that the chairman and the vice-chairman of the National Farm Products Marketing Council are appointed by the Governor in Council.

Clause 5 provides that members of the Council become public servants.

The purpose of the act, as defined in clause 6, is to maintain and promote an efficient and competitive agriculture industry. We can therefore guess right away that this just means that small farms will disappear.

From a political viewpoint, this would be tremendous, because the government is playing a winning game since at present 92 per cent of Canadian voters are non-farmers. The government listens to the urban population and will be able to handle the farmers at will.

Clause 6(2)(b) makes it clear that it is intended to protect both the consumers and the producers and with only 8 per cent of the population engaged in agriculture, the workers will be the winners. I am not against the workers but the figures are there, Mr. Speaker.

Let us see now what are the Council's powers. Under clause 7(a)(i)(ii) and (iii), the Council may require any person engaged in production or marketing to register with an agency and to maintain books and records in such form as it may require.

As indicated in clause 18 (2), the Governor in Council may designate the new products which will be regulated anywhere in Canada.

The objects and powers of the agencies are to promote a strong, efficient and competitive industry. An agency may purchase, package, process, store, export and sell any product as indicated in clause 23.

As far as arrangements with the provinces are concerned a federal agency may perform on behalf of a province any function relating to intraprovincial trade on any regulated product. It may also grant to a provincial body powers of regulation in relation to the marketing within the province.

The powers of the inspectors are described in clause 34 which indicates that the inspectors may enter any place if they are convinced there is any regulated product or a product intended to be marketed in interprovincial or export trade and may examine the records or other documents in such place.

I shall now deal with penalties. I refer to clauses 36 and 37. With respect to failure to