

The agricultural situation is far from bright, especially in Quebec, whatever the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture thinks about it. And I shall quote a few figures showing that the situation is serious.

At page 11, volume 1349 of the *news bulletin* published by the Department of Agriculture, the following appears:

Although the general consumer price index shows an increase of 36 per cent between 1948-1952 and 1964-1968, the retail price of food has increased by only 33 per cent. Prices to the farmers have increased only by 9 per cent during that same period.

And further, we can read that in 1948, the average hourly wage which was 92 cents, enabled people to buy 18 large Grade A eggs. In 1968, the average hourly wage which was \$2.58, enabled them to buy 59 eggs of the same grade. It is always the same people, i.e. the farmers, who suffer the consequences of an ailing, retrograde economy, with or without planning by the Minister of Agriculture, the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce, etc.

I am convinced that many believe the government helps farmers considerably. Nevertheless, what can make up for the present lack in product marketing? I should now like to quote part of page 2 of the aforementioned bulletin:

Canadian farmers do not receive many subsidies. A comparison with the OECD shows that federal expenditures on behalf of Canadian agriculture (including not only subsidies but all services such as research and inspection) come to an average of about \$286 per person actively engaged in agriculture against \$1,287 in the United States. The level of Canadian support of agriculture is one of the lowest in the Western world.

We can see from this, that it is senseless to say that the farmers are oversubsidized. Their incomes are no more encouraging as they follow a downward curve. One can read at page 191 of the report presented by the *Canadian Agriculture Outlook Conference* held in Ottawa on November 24 and 25 last, and I quote:

—the total cash received from the operation of farms in 1969 is supposed to be about \$4,290 million, i.e. \$100 million less than in 1968.

At page 195 of that same report, it is stated that in 1969, the net profit of farmers amounted to about \$425 million, i.e. about 10 per cent less than for 1968. Now, the expenditures have increased by about \$117 million. When one has a look at these figures one understands easily that Canadian cows are not so well looked after as the member for Richelieu seems to believe.

#### *Farm Products Marketing Agencies Bill*

To cope with this we have Bill C-197. I approve the establishment of a National Farm Products Marketing Council so long as farmers are able to move freely within that agency.

As I read the bill carefully I found that many clauses could be improved.

Clause 2(d) says that marketing

—includes selling and offering for sale and buying, pricing, assembling, packing, processing, transporting, storing and any other act necessary to prepare the product in a form—

I feel that the government is firmly taking over the whole farm products trade.

Further, under clause 2(e)(iii), we realize that a marketing plan may, and I quote:

—determine the quantity in which and the price, time and place at which the regulated product or any variety, class or grade thereof may be marketed in interprovincial or export trade.

Under those provisions, the government would therefore determine the price, time and place, etc., at which the farm products may be marketed. The farmer would thus become simply a government employee with no freedom whatsoever as to his production.

In addition, only the farmers licensed by the government or the persons appointed by it would be able to go into production, as is provided for in clause 2(e)(v), which reads, in part, as follows:

—a system for the licensing of persons engaged in the growing or production of the regulated product—

Thus, the farmer will no longer be free since everything will be left to the discretion of the authorities appointed by the government.

The government will even be able to ask the farmer for "levies or charges", as stipulated in paragraph (vi) of subclause (e) of clause 2, and I quote:

—the imposition and collection by the appropriate agency of levies or charges from persons engaged in the growing or production of the regulated product—

As to the regulated product, subclause (g) of clause 2 provides the following, and I quote:

—any farm product to the extent that it is grown or produced—

And further on, we read this:

—in any region of Canada designated in the proclamation that authorizes an agency to exercise its powers—

In my opinion, the government is taking over all farm products through the people appointed by it.