

Farm Products Marketing Agencies Bill

does not detract from the petroleum industry. But agriculture is still the primary industry. If one examines closely the Canada Year Book he will find that in Ontario the gross national product is equal to that of any of the western provinces when one considers all the farm commodities marketed. The only exception perhaps would be in the few years when there were large sales of grain in Western Canada.

Let us take a look at what this bill really would do. First of all, our position as a party is that we were the party which in 1935 set up the Canadian Wheat Board. It was not a Wheat Board such as we have today, which is controlled by a group of employees of the cabinet. It was a board representative of the producers. The idea of the Canadian Wheat Board was that it would organize the sellers against the organized purchasers, because at that time grain was on the open grain exchange and was subject to fluctuation. In those days grain sold for as low as 20 cents a bushel.

The government of the day, led by the Prime Minister from my home city, brought in legislation known as the Canadian Wheat Board Act. At that time the Canadian Wheat Board was not a compulsory board. It was set up to market a certain percentage of grain and to protect the farmers. It had the support of the wheat pools and the farm organizations. When we look back in history we find that in 1935 the only people who did not support the legislation were the members of the Liberal Party. All one need do to establish this fact is to examine *Hansard* for that period.

Let us take a look at the present situation. What the government wants to do in Canada is take over the marketing, by proclamation, of all the products produced on the farm. Today I plead particularly for the cattlemen of western Canada. If I might use this phrase without being presumptuous, I would say God only knows, if the cattle markets get into the condition the wheat market is in under this government, what will be left of western Canada? The land will fall into the hands of the state, as promised by the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) in the city of Weyburn during the last election.

Mr. Olson: That is not true.

Mr. Woolliams: We have heard a good deal of propaganda lately in respect of this compulsory board. Although it is under the jurisdiction of the Minister without Portfolio from

[Mr. Woolliams.]

Saskatchewan, nevertheless the Minister of Agriculture is on the hustings from time to time defending this particular policy. Not so long ago he sat to my left as a member of a right wing party. I am sure that if he were standing in my place tonight he would be attacking this kind of legislation which he is now trying to pilot through the House, because he would be against this dictatorialness.

Let us look at the Wheat Board. They talk about a world surplus. There is no real wheat surplus. There is a surplus in respect of buyers. Two-thirds of the world's people go to bed hungry every night. Yet we have what we call the LIFT program. All it will ever lift when this plan begins to operate will be the top six inches of soil of the summerfallow of the Prairies. Let us look at what is said about the surplus and what is to be done. They will appoint the civil servants and bureaucrats, they will make the proclamation and then they will take over the control of cattle, hogs and other farm products.

I have read the terms and conditions of this bill. The minister had better go back to his legal officers to find out what it says. Let us look at what this set-up would do. I have before me the latest report prepared by S. C. Hudson for the Economic Council of Canada. This is what it says:

Canada's wheat export position has deteriorated—

It does not say there is a surplus.

—from a 24 per cent share of the 54 million ton average wheat marketings for the 1962/66 period to a 19 per cent share of 45 million tons marketed in 1968. An examination of Canada's competitive position in 23 countries or groups of associated countries, which in 1967 accounted for more than 80 per cent of the total world imports of wheat and provided more than 80 per cent of Canada's export wheat market, indicates that Canada's share has been declining in most markets.

● (8:20 p.m.)

What has really happened is that we cattlemen in Alberta do not want the government getting into the cattle business. I say now to the Liberal government, and particularly to the Minister of Agriculture who comes from Medicine Hat, one of the great ranch areas of western Canada, that I am sure the ranchers in his constituency and the ranchers in Alberta will tell him and his government to keep their hands off cattle. They do not want the government interfering in the cattle industry.

Mr. Olson: No one intends to.

Mr. Woolliams: Let me tell the minister that under this bill he will have the power to