

Farm Products Marketing Agencies Bill

small farmers there whether or not they will be included in the legislation?

Mr. Faulkner: I am sure the minister will be pleased to provide that definition.

Mr. Howard (Skeena): My question is related to the previous one. The hon. member for Peterborough (Mr. Faulkner) read extracts from the press release of the minister of December 6 in which he said, if I recall his words correctly, that the government had a comprehensive program to aid small family farms, or something to that effect. Would the hon. gentleman mind giving us the details, because so far they have been hidden? Would he be prepared to tell the House what the details of this comprehensive program are?

Mr. Faulkner: If I thought that that was directly relevant to my remarks, I would be pleased to do so; but in view of the fact that it is not, and I am bound by the rule of relevancy, I cannot. But I will be pleased to explain it to the hon. gentleman privately, as well as to the other hon. member who raised the same question.

Mr. Howard (Skeena): I rise on a point of order, Mr. Speaker. Surely the hon. gentleman cannot have it both ways. He cannot quote from the speech of the minister, hold that up as a reason for support of the bill and then refuse to answer questions about the very quotation he gave from the minister's remarks. He is obviously unable to answer it.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel): Order, please. Hon. gentlemen may be permitted to ask questions, but I do not think we can allow debate to arise following the comments made by the hon. member for Peterborough. There are other members who wish to take part in the debate. The Chair is ready to recognize the hon. member for Qu'Appelle-Moose Mountain (Mr. Southam) and I do not think we should spend too much time on questions unless the House consents to it.

Mr. Howard (Skeena): It is the answers that we are worried about, not the questions.

Mr. R. R. Southam (Qu'Appelle-Moose Mountain): Mr. Speaker, coming basically from a rural and agricultural section of Canada, I feel it is my duty to take part in the debate on Bill C-176 at this time. I was very interested and listened attentively to the remarks of the hon. member for Peterborough (Mr. Faulkner) and I wonder whether some of the frustrations which I noted in his comments do not stem from the fact that when he referred to the confusing speeches made by members of various parties he was really frustrated over the results of the recent elections which indicated to me that Canadian farmers in particular are unhappy with the agricultural policies of this government. When you look at the record of the votes in Peterborough in the last provincial election you find that the Liberal party had only 9 per cent of them. So I can readily understand the hon. member's frustration.

Bill C-176 had its debut originally in the twenty-seventh Parliament, at which time it was referred to as Bill C-197. The fact that we are still debating the proposed legislation two years later is a clear indication to me that the bill is poorly drafted, too controversial, unclear in its direction

and too all-encompassing. A further indication of this is the fact that hundreds of letters and dozens of briefs and protests from every area of Canada have been directed to the Standing Committee on Agriculture with suggestions for a large number of amendments.

I commend the hon. member for Crowfoot (Mr. Horner) for introducing the three amendments which were grouped together and which we are debating today, namely, Nos. 1, 5 and 22, which I think are of basic importance. These three amendments do in part try to clear up some of the disagreeable features of this bill of which we and the farmers are now well aware, and thanks to the witnesses whom we have heard and to the research and industry of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition, members of the opposition have been able to look very carefully at this bill in view of the experience we have had with the haphazard agricultural legislation produced by this government heretofore.

Let us consider the Dairy Commission program, the quota system and the fact that we are now faced with importing millions of pounds of butter in the next few months to meet our domestic needs. Let us consider the Lift program which was in fact a quota or production control policy which cost the western wheat growers half a billion dollars in loss of production income, a loss that can never be made up. Let us consider the grain stabilization bill, Bill C-244, which turned out to be the worst fiasco in farm legislation yet produced by this government.

The beef and cattle producers of this country have always been the most independent and successful segment of our Canadian agricultural industry and have always refrained from asking for any kind of bureaucratic or government interference in their industry. Little wonder that the Canadian Cattlemen's Association is deeply concerned about the bill and the effects it might have on their industry if it is passed in the present form without some reasonable amendments.

In listening to the debate on this legislation so far, I have found that members on the government side have been carried away by some success on the part of some of the provincial marketing boards, but at the same time have overlooked the many failures of some boards. They seem to think that a national marketing board would work better. What is needed is better government policies in marketing all our exportable products including those from agriculture, rather than a regressive or production control policy.

Let us remember the International Wheat Agreement which was a reasonable, global, orderly marketing policy for our western Canadian wheat. But the Liberal government was an active party in bringing about the demise of this effective agreement in Geneva in 1967. However, in Bill C-176 we are not speaking about global marketing but about so-called orderly marketing within our Canadian boundaries, cluttered up with production controls even to the extent of interprovincial barriers being set up. We have had examples of this with Fedco and the infamous chicken and egg war.

Early in this debate the hon. member for Peace River (Mr. Baldwin) set out a number of constitutional problems that must be avoided if we are to refrain from balkanizing