

*Farm Products Marketing Agencies Bill*

grains. However, other people in this country are concerned: they wonder if this is the reason the minister is not concerned about feed grains. It is time the people of this nation knew where they stood on this issue. It is time the minister was questioned about his reasons for introducing this marketing system. Various agencies are being set up throughout this nation purporting to be involved in the marketing of various grains and other commodities.

I wish to refer to a letter received by all Members of Parliament from the Prairie region from the Pallister Wheat Growers Association. I use this as an analogy to the bill in so far as the setting up of this marketing agency is concerned. It is to be noted that the minister assisted in the establishment of the Palliser Wheat Growers Association. This is spelled out very clearly in the last paragraph of the letter:

There is no doubt we are on the way and the help you gave us at the outset helped get us started. We are grateful.

I have no reason to be either for or against the Palliser Wheat Growers Association. According to this letter dated April 20, 1970, they are involved and concerned about wheat only. What does concern me is a minister of the government deliberately assisting in the establishment of other organizations, as is clearly spelled out in this letter. I wonder whether the minister is really concerned about the orderly marketing of grain generally. If we fragmentize the producers of this nation, no matter what products they produce, we may never have orderly marketing. I hope when the minister replies, if he does, he will clarify his position in so far as the Palliser Wheat Growers Association is concerned. I believe it can be used as a clear analogy to the bill now before us. Possibly after the minister sets up organizations in various parts of Canada he will have this bill to support those organizations. This letter, addressed to the minister, reads in part:

You undoubtedly know that the Palliser Wheat Growers Association has been the ultimate result of the investigation we started early this year and about which we met with you. I was instructed by the board to inform you of our objectives and of our progress so far.

• (8:50 p.m.)

As I say, I believe this organization could serve some useful purpose, but the people of Canada and those who actually produce farm commodities are wondering whether there is something sinister behind the bill. I repeat

[Mr. Skoberg.]

that our party has always stood solidly behind the idea of a national marketing board for agricultural products. I, too, take this position. But we have our suspicions. Why should we be suspicious? I realize that grain is not one of the products covered by the bill before us, but such programs as operation LIFT make people suspicious. We know that this program will not be successful in the situation we face today. The other day during the question period I asked whether or not there were some 307 million bushels of grain bootlegged. I asked: Where did it go to? The minister doubted my figures and the Speaker ruled that the question was hypothetical. I quote from the *Toronto Daily Star* of April 25:

In November, 1969, the Dominion Bureau of Statistics estimated that by July 31 of this year there would be a surplus of 1,534,600,000 bushels of grain choking western elevators and farm storage. This week DBS revised its figure to read 1,227,600,000.

Question: So what happened to the other 307 million?

As the writer of this article asks, what happened to the extra 307 million bushels? The minister should attempt to clarify these figures when he has a chance to reply, and then tell me why we should not be suspicious of figures which we know to be inaccurate. To get back to the bill before us, we must ask ourselves whether the government envisages an orderly marketing scheme, one which will serve the interests of the producers, or one which serves some other purpose.

I see that the board is to be concerned with the marketing of a wide range of products including animals, meat, eggs, poultry, wool, maple products, honey and so on. Again, I have a feeling that hon. members have reason to feel suspicious; that they have reason to suggest that the amendment is a valid proposal which ought to be supported by members on both sides of the House. If the board is to mean anything, farmers must be represented on it. There is no way in which the people of Canada will accept a marketing board in the absence of such representation. I believe the minister himself would like words to this effect written into the bill to ensure that the Governor in Council shall not have sole power to establish this new body.

There is sometimes reason to wonder what is going on in connection with the Grains Council, whether or not its establishment was a move to get rid of the Wheat Board by taking away its powers and giving them to somebody else, producing a hodge-podge of