

Farm Products Marketing Agencies Bill

And if, after these findings, the minister does not agree, as is sometimes the case, it will rest with Parliament to show the people the lack of sincerity of some representatives regarding findings reached in a democratic way.

I feel that this would not only protect the producer but the members of the Council, the federal government officials as well, and would permit more objective studies at the federal and provincial levels. It would be a great relief to the Council and it would eliminate a good deal of controversies which set provinces over against each other presently, because of the dictatorial spirit that you feel hovering over each of them.

If the government wants to force dictatorship upon us, let it say so. We shall get organized accordingly. Provinces are led to believe that government is exercised in a democratic manner but it is not so. That is the reason why the provinces are in revolt. I hope that for once, the minister will think it over and amend the paragraph of his bill which provides for the establishment of the National Marketing Council, so that each one of the elements which I mentioned earlier will be represented. Here is a way to obtain more democracy, which will greatly contribute to the understanding and national unity that we all want.

Today, we have reached the point where most provinces are at war with the federal government. And who is to blame? Not the provinces. No, no! Let us face facts. It is rather against this dictatorship which is forced upon them. For once, let us come back to democracy and I sincerely hope that this bill will provide the opportunity to make such a gesture.

[English]

Mr. Jerry Pringle (Fraser Valley East): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in support of Bill C-197 and in doing so, I congratulate the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Olson) for the speed with which he has implemented another of his pre-election assurances. These assurances, Mr. Speaker, were given to the vast majority of farmers who are clamoring for the right to study, plan and organize their commodity groups on a proper business-like basis in competition with other food commodity producer groups, as well as area and international competitors.

The enabling legislation provided in Bill C-197 is not new or earthshaking. It complements similar enabling provincial legislation

which will extend the benefits of planned production and marketing on a national basis. Farmers everywhere have been conducting a quiet revolution in an attempt to bring stability to farm product markets. They have worked diligently in co-operation with governmental experimental research and have been highly successful in reducing production costs over the years. As costs were reduced, the savings were passed on to the consumers. Little or no work has been done on a national basis relating to market research. The only factor in our economy which can assure a fair return to the producer is the market price. This factor has been almost totally neglected. Most business and service industries are permitted to price their products and services, while the farmers must take what they are offered.

Individual farmers engaged in commodity production are expected to estimate market requirements without the slightest scrap of information regarding the intentions of the other thousands of farmers. It is true that periodical market outlooks have been issued by various government agencies and that politicians have made forecasts, but no specific approach to market research relating to individual products has been carried out which could assure producers some safeguards when the time came for the product to go to market.

I submit, Mr. Speaker, that Canadian agricultural producers have been encouraged to produce in surplus in order to provide cheap food. Overproduction causes low market prices, usually below cost of production. The low prices discourage production and subsequently result in short supplies and high prices to consumers. For many years farm product prices rose and fell like the ocean waves. This unstable, disastrous system was called the law of supply and demand. The producer received high prices when he had little or no product to sell, disastrously low prices when he overproduced. Occasionally the surpluses, especially on perishable products, became so burdensome that the law of supply and demand was temporarily repealed. The government would then provide a subsidy, but this policy has never been able to solve the problem of instability in market prices.

Subsidies, Mr. Speaker, were and still are a valid charge against consumers. The subsidy payments merely pay production losses and enable producers to stay in business. Today, we live in a climate of agricultural subsidies and as long as farmers are unable to plan