

*Farm Products Marketing Agencies Bill*

Rather than being based upon a belief in the superior virtue of rural life or upon some nostalgia for existing rural institutions, my plea for the family farm is based upon the fact that it provides men and women with a respectable and rewarding way of life, a way of life vastly to be preferred to that lived by the great majority of the displaced farmers in our cities. My plea is also based upon a desire to permit the rational and reasonable development of our urban areas and to avoid where possible the kind of situation which Paul Goodman, the noted American sociologist, described in his Massey lectures of 1966. In illustration I would like to quote a passage from Mr. Goodman's lectures as follows:

• (8:40 p.m.)

—in my own city of New York, during the past year we have been visited by 10 critical plagues, some of them temporary emergencies that could recur at any time, some abiding sores that are getting worse—The rivers and bays are polluted and often stink: in a huge city with no open spaces and few facilities for recreation, this is a calamity. The air is bad, but not critical, so I will not include it. The congestion is critical. Traffic often hardly moves, and new highways will only make the situation worse—As for human crowding, it is hard to know at what density people can no longer adapt, but there must be a point at which there are too many signals and the circuits become clogged, and where people do not have enough social space to feel possessed. In some areas, in my opinion, we have passed that point. In Harlem, there are 67,000 to the square mile; people live two and three to a room; and the average child of 12 will not have been half a mile from home.

Finally, there are the plagues that indicate breakdown, psychopathology and sociopathology. There are an estimated 70,000 dope addicts, with the attendant desperate petty burglary. The juvenile delinquency starts like urban juvenile delinquency of the past, but it persists into addiction or other social withdrawal because there is less neighbourhood support and less economic opportunity. Families have now grown up for several generations dependent on relief, reformatories, public hospitals, and asylums as the normal course of life. A psychiatric survey of midtown Manhattan has shown that 75 per cent have marked neurotic symptoms and 25 per cent need psychiatric treatment, which is of course unavailable.

Well, who needs it? Do we want that for our country? And yet that is the way we are heading. Mr. Goodman argues that although the urban areas are patently unliveable in his own country, they have narrowed their inhabitants' experience so that no other choice seems available to them. They just cannot contemplate any other form of life. Mr. Goodman went on to speak specifically of Canada in the following terms:

In Canada, a more rational judgment is possible. You have a rural ratio of 15—20 per cent, including independent fishermen, lumberers, etc., that we

[Mr. Rowland.]

ought to envy. Your cities, though in need of improvement are manageable in size. There is still a nodding acquaintance between city and country.

Mr. Goodman went on to urge us not to proceed down the same primrose path he felt his country has trodden, but to keep the kind of urban-rural ratio we now have and, as our technology and population grow, to work out a better urban-rural symbiosis. I agree with Mr. Goodman but I despair of this government taking action which will indicate that it has accepted the advice of Mr. Goodman and others like him.

The report today of the task force on agriculture reinforces my fear. I despair, also, because for too long the agricultural programs of the federal government have been based upon the statistics of commodity production rather than upon the consideration of the life of the farmer. What we need in an agricultural policy is to decide what kind of rural community we wish to create and then go about creating it. For too long Canada has not had a national agricultural policy worthy of the name. The federal Department of Agriculture has never shown any really sincere attempt to deal with the adjustment side of agriculture. I would have less quarrel with this glaring lack if other federal agencies such as the Department of Manpower and Immigration and the Department of Regional Economic Expansion demonstrated an adequate understanding of the problem and a preparedness to act. We have yet to see convincing evidence of either.

Moreover, in recent years there has been a serious decline in the effectiveness of federal leadership on the commercial side of agriculture. To finish the picture of almost unrelieved gloom, there is now a distinct danger that the wide brush approach toward inflation that has seemingly been adopted by the federal government will further aggravate and weaken an already deflated Prairies' agricultural economy. In short, there is not now and never has been an effective Canadian policy for agriculture. The absence of such a policy is directly responsible for the chronic instability in the agricultural sector of our economy, including the present serious decline in the income of the Prairie farmer especially.

For too long we in this country have been slaves to the myth that the mindless forces of economics and technology must necessarily govern the pattern of our social development. For too long we have been slaves to the myths that bigness means enhanced efficiency,