

*Farm Products Marketing Agencies Bill*

ers a chance to be heard. But, those who take part in the proceedings within the Committee on Agriculture know that the participation of the farmers is practically non-existent, which is a tremendous farce. The government does not change its mind although farmers appear before the committee to state their views.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I think this is the end result of the just society and of participatory democracy, which have been promised to us by the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) and the members of his cabinet.

Before dwelling on the disastrous consequences of this bill for the farmers of my province I ask once more the minister to see that the views of the farmers are taken into account with regard to the implementation of this measure. May the minister acknowledge that the government must respect one of the most fundamental aspects of our democracy: participation.

The province of Quebec will surely be hardest hit by this new legislation. What I have to say about Quebec also applies to the other provinces. I shall talk about Quebec because I have the impression that henceforth that province will find it a lot more difficult to get Ottawa's ear, especially since the election of the new government which, according to some mischief-makers, would be nothing more than a branch office of the Parliament in Ottawa. I do not dare believe it, Mr. Speaker.

I also regret that the federal members from Quebec are not as talkative as they were during the provincial election campaign in promoting in the House the interests of Quebec farmers. I am most careful not to make exceptions, Mr. Speaker.

What was left of the famous Jean-Luc Pepin formula on co-operative federalism collapsed with the introduction of this bill. In taking over the marketing of farm products, the federal government will sooner or later force the provincial legislatures to reduce markedly if not completely their activity in the field of agriculture. The government forgot to read Section 95 of the Canadian Constitution which clearly stipulates that agriculture is a field of joint jurisdiction. Where will the bill leave the provinces? It is difficult to foresee.

The legislation authorizes the federal government to compel almost all provincial marketing offices in existence to adopt federal standards or to force non-organized producers to create marketing agencies subjected to the same standards.

Indeed, a plan can be organized by groups, a national agency can be set up without the unanimous consent or even the approval of a majority of the provinces. In addition, that plan could, through the extra-provincial power or the power to import, destroy the extra-provincial market or invade the provincial market of a renegade agricultural sector. Unorganized or independent sectors would be compelled to comply. They would not be in a position to hold out against an efficient federal plan for the management of stocks. According to the Constitution, the federal government could conclude with a province an arrangement to delegate powers which could be prejudicial to other provinces and that without the consent of the latter. What has happened to the principles of the Fulton-Favreau formula so warmly upheld by this government?

Why not carry out the suggestion to establish farm unions, at provincial level and under the responsibility of each province? In addition to ensuring the acknowledgment of the farming profession such unions could co-ordinate the marketing of the farm products with the co-operation of the unions from the other provinces and with the assistance of the federal authorities. They would be much closer to the farmers and could better assist them in altering, restricting or abandoning their production, whatever the case might be.

Under the bill before us, the farmers are simply left to themselves. In Quebec, it is no secret that agriculture is now in a precarious condition, especially following the recent policies concerning milk subsidies. Unless we go slowly, applying measures providing for restrictions and planning, we run the risk of destroying the agricultural sector. Quebec is in the "major league" where mixed farming and limited income is concerned. This new law will force a good number of those farms out of business. Is that inevitable consequence sought to rationalize agriculture? Nevertheless, that is what is going to happen unless the government provides for special measures to help the small farmers who otherwise will have to give up their farms as a result of this new marketing legislation.

Has a pension plan been provided for the old farmers who will have to stop producing? Before setting up this council, before coming up with legislation that quite a number of milk or wheat producers cannot accept, a government that is concerned about the well-