

*Farm Products Marketing Agencies Bill*

Some time ago the government took the course of bending every effort to increase industrial production to a maximum. It wanted maximum production of primary resources, maximum production at the manufacturing level, at the secondary industry level and the like. The Department of Manpower and the Department of Regional Economic Expansion spend much money from the public purse in assisting industrial productive capacities in this country to increase.

None of this assistance is available to the farmer. For that reason we must ask ourselves several questions. Does the government intend this? If it does, is this bill part of the policy of the government? Does the government intend, through this bill, to industrialize the agricultural section of the economy? Does the government intend to industrialize farming? Does the government intend to drive the family farmer out of existence? Does it intend to drive the small farmer off the land and into the cities and turn agriculture into an industrial business as opposed to an agricultural business. Those are questions we must ask ourselves.

I am inclined to think, having read this bill and the amendments now before us, and having examined the agricultural policies that the government has enunciated from time to time, that the government intends this and that the bill is part and parcel of that process. At this stage, therefore, we are not dealing principally with marketing boards, which of course can be of tremendous assistance to the farmer; we are actually dealing with the policy orientation of the government. We note, for example, that the cheese industry is now geared to industrial concepts. That industry, which is part of agriculture, is being industrialized.

We note with respect to poultry, hogs and other farm commodities, that the policy direction is toward integration. Under that system the retailer or the feed grain industry will control and dominate the agricultural production sector of the industry. The effect of that, of course, is that the farmer is being moved off the land; he is being moved out of the rural area and into the city. The government is attempting to establish in this country a structure of agriculture which is industrial in concept and not rural or agricultural. A structure like that is not concerned about the individual farm, the individual family, the rural community or the like.

Those are questions to which we should seek answers. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, if I may digress for a moment—I do not wish to be out of order but merely to digress—I suggest that we should look at the attitude of the Department of Regional Economic Expansion, see what it has said and what has been said to it about rural life, rural family living, and about what happens to rural communities when through the design of industry, through the drive for profits or through the design of government we attempt to reduce the number of people in agriculture and establish, in its place, something akin to a manufacturing type of industry.

• (3:10 p.m.)

The Department of Regional Economic Expansion helped to finance, if in fact it did not finance completely, the operations of a group called the Canadian Council on Rural Development. That council made its third report

[Mr. Howard (Skeena.)

and review to the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion (Mr. Marchand) in July of 1970. As I said earlier, whether the department financed the operation of the Canadian Council on Rural Development entirely or to a limited degree is immaterial.

The report of the council was made to the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion. This third report and its review relates almost entirely to the damage accruing to the rural farm family and to rural communities as a result of the policy decisions of the government. It talks about the movement over the years of people from the farm to the city. It questions, not so much why that movement in itself is valuable or otherwise but talks, rather, in terms of whether the extent of that movement is necessary and helpful. It poses a very real question which this bill and this House should be posing.

Let me quote very briefly from page 10 of this report. This passage is underlined in the report to make it even more significant and to draw it even more to the attention of the government. With regard to the flow of population from the country to the urban areas, the report says this:

The real question is not so much whether mobility is necessary but how much mobility is equitable, not so much whether there should be a flow of population from rural to urban areas, but how great and how rapid a flow is desirable in social and human terms.

That, I think, is the crux of what a farm policy should take into account, namely, social and human considerations. Obviously, this government's policy in terms of agriculture ignores that concept completely. The report also reached a conclusion, as if this were necessary, because everybody in agriculture, everybody who owns a farm or farms for a living knows it to be the case, but in case the government did not know about it the Canadian Council on Rural Development took the opportunity to draw to the attention of the government this conclusion in respect of the disparities in Canadian incomes:

The conclusion is unavoidable. The most striking disparities in Canadian incomes are not so much between provinces as between the agricultural sector and the non-agricultural sector, in every part of the country.

Again, this passage is underlined in the report to give it even more impact. I shall not make specific reference to this but the report gives tables and statistics to indicate that in some cases in some areas agricultural income is as low as 27 per cent of the non-agricultural family income. It is almost a quarter of what is generally earned in a province. The report talks about the cost-price squeeze which I mentioned earlier. Another part of the report reads as follows:

The Canadian farmer, in fact, is trapped in a very similar position to that of the commodity producer in the underdeveloped countries, a position made worse because of inflation.

This report is a document to which I believe the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Olson) should pay great attention and should read even though it was not developed through his department. It talks about the fact that incomes are less in respect of farms, farm families and farm workers than in respect of non-agricultural communities and non-agricultural workers. It talks about the fact that employment possibilities are fewer in rural than in urban areas. It talks about the fact that the level and quality of the standard of living available to farmers and