

*Farm Products Marketing Agencies Bill*

In addition to that you will have the costs of a very large bureaucracy, which will be added to the marketing costs. There will be costs attributable to this council, to these agencies and probably to a horde of inspectors who will be going round to make sure the farmer is not selling a few dozen eggs to his friends. So you will see a very great increase in the cost of marketing because of the bureaucracy which is essential if you are to operate a system of this kind.

If you are to have an increase in marketing costs—unquestionably there will be an increase; I do not think anybody can argue otherwise—this increase will have to be borne by someone. If the purpose of the legislation is to give the producer more money, who will bear the increased cost? It will be the consumer. Perhaps that is the government's idea. Perhaps the idea is that the consumer will be charged considerably higher prices for all agricultural products. If this is the case, I think the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mr. Basford) has the duty and responsibility toward the consumers of this country to tell them that the cost of butter, eggs, beef, pork and so forth, once this bill passes, will go up and up by fairly considerable amounts.

That being the case, I suggest that the government, before putting this measure through, should wait for the reaction of the consumers. If the government wanted to be honest about this matter, the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs should, as it is his duty to do, inform the consumers of the country that the purpose of the bill is to increase considerably the consumers' food costs. As I say, if the purpose of the bill is to secure a greater return for the farmer, the inevitable effect is that there will be an increased price for consumers, and that ought to be made clear to the consumers.

**Mr. Olson:** No, that is not correct.

**Mr. Harkness:** However, Mr. Speaker, if that is not the purpose of the bill, its only other purpose that I can see is to give to the government complete control over our most important basic industry and, in effect, to reduce the farmers of this country to a status very little different from that of feudal peasants of medieval Europe who were told what to do, what to grow and how they were to grow it, only to have their produce taken from them. That is the position the farmers of our country will be in. They will be told by

the government and its bureaucrats exactly how to carry on their business, what to plant, how much to plant, and so on.

**Mr. Gibson:** Not under clause 8.

**Mr. Harkness:** That is so under any clause, so far as I can see.

**Mr. Baldwin:** President Pierre will tell the farmers what to do.

**Mr. Harkness:** Let us look at the clause which particularly appalls me, clause 37(1), which provides in part:

Every person who violates any provision of this act or of a marketing plan that an agency is authorized to implement or who fails to comply with a requirement of the council pursuant to paragraph (e) of section 7—

In other words, any farmer who violates any provision of the act or any regulation made by the council, and so on, under the act is guilty of an indictable offence and liable to imprisonment for a term not exceeding two years. Here we can charge a farmer with an indictable offence if he decides to grow, we will say, 40 acres of tobacco after the marketing board has told him he can grow only 20 acres. He will be liable to be imprisoned for two years, or he may be guilty of an offence punishable on summary conviction in which case he will pay a fine or go to jail.

How ridiculous can we get in this country, if farmers are to be jailed for growing or selling wheat, cattle, eggs, tobacco, or whatever the product may be, without first having authorization from the duly authorized board to do so? Here you have a situation in which a poor little farmer who sells a few dozen crates of eggs to some of his friends will be liable to go to jail for two years for doing so. The thing is so ridiculous that in any past period, when I would consider more common sense attitudes prevailed, to bring in any provision along that line would have been laughed out of his House. In addition to that, I submit from the practical point of view this whole scheme is a sort of pipe dream. It cannot be put into operation on a Canada-wide basis unless all the provinces agree.

● (9:20 p.m.)

I find it almost impossible to believe that as far as marketing a certain number of commodities is concerned, in fact quite a large number of farm commodities, every province will agree, particularly if the farmers of a province have a relatively small share of the production at the time the bill is put into