

*Farm Products Marketing Agencies Bill*

The third weakness—I hesitate to call it a weakness but it is one of the pivots on which the bill must turn—is that because marketing has been, and is, under provincial jurisdiction, in some instances there cannot be any national marketing agency unless with the complete co-operation of provincial governments. As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, it may be that they will have to turn over much of their legal jurisdiction to federal authorities. Through the years experience has shown that provincial governments very jealously guard their provincial jurisdictions and are loath to turn them over to federal agencies. There are many provinces in this country, and it would require the abstention or opposition of only one of the provinces concerned with the major production of any primary product to almost invalidate and render the agency useless on a national scale.

So, Mr. Speaker, we have this very precarious position: the success of this bill must hinge upon co-operation of the provinces and proper utilization of their powers. It is further complicated by the fact that the provincial legislatures differ greatly, and there would have to be a meeting of minds and uniform legislation among the provinces before a national agency or even a farm council could function.

Thus, Mr. Speaker, I think you have some indication of the complexity of this bill. It is not a simple piece of legislation, and the powers envisaged under the regulation are great. Indeed, in his evidence before the committee I think the minister indicated it would be necessary to negotiate a contract, almost, between the federal government and the provinces with respect to some commodity groups in order to achieve any success.

Since the success of the measure hinges on the voluntary entry by a province into the terms and regulation of this bill—there is nothing compulsory—you see how nebulous a vehicle we are dealing with and how precarious and long the negotiations could be. The negotiations must be done by men of good will, Mr. Speaker, men with the determination to make an agency work; and they must be done on a provincial basis, almost setting aside provincial aspirations.

I am rather inclined to follow those who believe that the enactment of legislation of this type, rather than solving on a national scale the marketing problems of primary producers today will have the opposite effect. I think it will almost force provinces to become ever more self-sufficient in regard to production within their own borders. If this takes place, Mr. Speaker, the bill will bring about a result exactly opposite to that intended.

As legislators, it is not for us to determine whether the agricultural industry of our country should have this legislation; that should be determined by the primary producers themselves. I believe that our responsibility is to see that if the majority of the producers of this country wish this type of vehicle to promote their ends, then by close scrutiny, by inquiry and questions we must provide the best possible bill that we can, with the least possible government interference into the normal course and trade of the agricultural industry.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

[Mr. Danforth.]

**Mr. Danforth:** We must have the end in view of solving some of the problems facing the commodity groups today on a national scale. We will not be able to accomplish all this, of course. It is impossible under a single vehicle to deal with the majority of products in many provinces with different conditions. It is impossible to bring about Utopia. But if we make some progress we shall have served our end as parliamentarians and rendered a service to the industry.

• (9:50 p.m.)

We shall try to work, in co-operation with the government, to produce as fine a piece of legislation as we can. We know, after we have done this, that the bill will not be perfect and that it will need to be brought back to the House in future for amendment. We hope we can provide this service to the agricultural industry, to our consumers and marketing agencies. It is an experiment which must be undertaken. It must function in order that we may see where the weaknesses are, and so we may either cure those weaknesses or eliminate this type of legislation altogether. Whether it will serve its purpose we do not know. It appears to me and to my colleagues that the legislation must be enacted, that its powers must be illustrated, so to speak, and brought to bear on the industry for a period perhaps of several years in order that we may determine whether it is successful.

We feel that we are gambling with the future of the agricultural industry by bringing in legislation of this type. But we also feel that if the primary producer is seeking this type of legislation, he ought to have the opportunity of working under it. We therefore hope that along with other parties of this House we shall be permitted to bring in amendments before the Standing Committee on Agriculture. We want the opportunity to bring in amendments, in a solemn and serious manner, which will be designed to make this legislation workable. We shall co-operate with all other parties in their amendments when they have the same goal in view as my party. I was very much impressed when the minister said tonight that the government is prepared to accept this type of approach to the bill.

**An hon. Member:** He is learning.

**Mr. Danforth:** He feels that perhaps amendments are necessary and that the government should consider them. With an approach such as this, I think we shall see a measure of success in the committee stage of the bill.

**Mr. Thomson:** Mr. Speaker, may I ask the hon. member a question? When he referred to management control of farm produce, was he suggesting that the federal government should become involved and should control produce through these boards, in the way it has become involved with the Canadian Wheat Board and the National Dairy Commission?

**Mr. Danforth:** No, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. A. P. Gleave (Saskatoon-Biggar):** Mr. Speaker, I was pleased to hear the minister set out some of the