

Farm Products Marketing Agencies Bill

order out of chaos. I think, however, that certain weaknesses have come to light. One is the lack of adequate communication between the Board and the farmers of western Canada. It would appear that the Canadian Wheat Board is now doing something about this in terms of developing an information program. I commend the Board for this. I think such an information program is long overdue. In respect of the dairy commission, we can take note of the experience there and the fact that policies are being foisted on farmers in all parts of Canada which directly affect their incomes and livelihood. The farmers have had no say in the programs of this commission.

It seems to me, in taking a look at the marketing legislation, that we could view it in terms of either the farmer existing on his own, which seems to be the attitude of some members of this House, or that public agencies with delegated powers could do the entire job. I believe it is essential to have government, public agencies and farmers working together toward a solution. It would appear to me that this is the concept which should be adopted in developing marketing legislation that would be of service to the farmers of Canada.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Roch La Salle (Joliette): Mr. Speaker, like my colleagues I had the opportunity to read the bill now under study, and I must admit at the outset that although it is well-meaning the means suggested to reach an objective must also be considered. I will, with as little prejudice as possible and for the information of hon. members, make some suggestions liable to improve the Canadian farmers' lot.

I do not intend to repeat what has already been said in the House but knowing that all Canadian farmers are greatly worried and aware of their difficulties I could not honestly abstain from participating in the debate on the legislation now under study. On behalf of the Canadian farmers, once more I ask the minister to be more careful than ever when their survival is at stake.

Mr. Speaker, I am very happy to take part in the debate on the bill to establish the National Farm Products Marketing council and to authorize the establishment of national marketing agencies.

I participate in the debate in order to urge the government to withdraw this bill and to

[Mr. Burton.]

bring forward another more flexible one, in order to improve the lot of the farmers of this country.

I also want to deal with another matter that is of very great concern to me, namely, the harmful effect that this legislation could have on the farmers of my province. I hope that after he has heard my remarks, the minister will have the courage to review the bill, otherwise, I hope that as a last resort, in committee, he will be flexible enough to see that some amendments are passed. If the minister takes a rigid position, as he did in the case of the subsidies to the dairy industry, I feel that will be the end of Canadian agriculture.

In introducing this bill, the minister has clearly indicated that the passing of a marketing legislation had been requested by groups of farmers and by some provincial governments' representatives. Now, we find by reading this bill that the government goes much further than it had been asked to do.

We recognize the need of regulating the marketing of farm products. This being said, we object to the fact that the farmers are not invited to participate in the implementation of this measure. This is why we intend to propose amendments that will provide the producers with a degree of control through their representation on the National Farm Products Marketing Council and its agencies. Moreover, we must see to it that no agency is created without the consent of the majority of the producers coming under this agency.

● (3:20 p.m.)

This legislation is so worded that it gives the officials of the National Council and of marketing agencies absolute power to grant production licences, to set quotas, to determine controls, prices, processes, marketing, stocking, distribution and packing of all farm products or of products that will come under this legislation by orders in council, without the Parliament's approval. Those officials will therefore have in their hands the future of the whole Canadian agricultural life. This is a dangerous operation. I suggest it would have been better to say clearly that the government is in favour of having only state-controlled farms in Canada.

This legislation will give the government in a devious way over-all control of the whole Canadian agriculture. And the government, thereby, takes away from the farmers any say in the decision-making process. It is not provided for farmers to be on the Council or on the agencies. They would like us to believe that those public hearings will give the farm-