

Farm Products Marketing Agencies Bill

assume that bureaucrats will develop plans that supposedly will be the most equitable and the most economically correct, simply because it does not have the confidence to debate adequately the specifics and philosophy of supply and market management in public.

The democratic and consultative sentiments expressed by the Minister of Agriculture are in profound conflict with the substance of Bill C-197. The substance of this bill provides the power to the government to construct, without a vote in Parliament or a plebiscite on the farm, an all-pervasive and statist, type of supply management, a concept which does not have the support of the minister's own task force on agriculture or the Canadian farm community. As the *Manitoba Co-operator* stated in an editorial of May 7—

Either the farmer is going to decide that as a member of a vital producer industry he will ask the government to provide the legislative framework in which he can conduct his own affairs, or whether he wants the government to make him an employee of a regimented, state-owned food production organization.

If it is not the policy of the government that the industry should be producer controlled, then the government should redraft Bill C-197. Under this legislation the cabinet will be able to place any farm product under a national marketing agency without any reference to Parliament. Such an agency would have the power to "determine the quantity of which and the price, time and place at which the regulated product or any variety, class or grade thereof may be marketed in the inter-provincial or export trade". The agency could require farmers to obtain a licence in order to grow or produce the regulated agricultural commodity or to market it in interprovincial or export trade. Marketing agencies would have the power to collect levies or charges to pay the costs of their operations, or to pool accounts through which farmers would get initial, interim and final payments. The farmer will be stuck with paying even for this huge bureaucratic machine.

The legislation provides for the appointment of inspectors who will have broad power to search for regulated commodities and examine books and documents of farmers. Any farmer who does not comply with a marketing agency order will be liable for up to two years in prison. Boy, oh boy! All our prisons will be filled with farmers. The cabinet will have the power to set up a National Farm Products Marketing Council that will supervise and review the operation of mar-

keting agencies and plans established under the proposed act. The responsibilities of the agencies would cover a farm commodity from production through to selling, pricing, packaging, transportation and storage.

The big question is this: Which is the force seeking such legislation, the farm groups speaking for farmers or government determination to shift agriculture from free enterprise to state control or, as they term it, farm supply management? If this legislation is enacted—and it will be if the government wishes to use its majority to push this bill through Parliament, as it did with the LIFT program—we need not worry about what Quebec wants or what the west wants. The Canadian people should start worrying about what the federal government wants.

It may be useful in this context to review some of the legislation introduced in this House by the government during the present session and to look at some of the proposals the government is considering, those being proposals on which it is basing further legislation. We now have the famous or, perhaps more aptly put, infamous white paper that proposes a confiscatory tax on small business and a capital gains tax, repeated every five years, that will simply kill any incentive for investment capital. And this, tied to an inheritance tax that makes it impossible for a family enterprise to carry on, should effectively eliminate the middle-income group within two generations.

Mr. Dinsdale: Big brother knows best.

Mr. Muir (Lisgar): More recently we have had the LIFT program that coerces farmers to summerfallow for two years in a row, a most doubtful farming practice, but one the farmer must carry on if he wants to have enough quota to market the grain he already has on hand. This was done without public consultation with our farmers and without consideration of the economic health of the Prairies. It was done because the government has adopted a defeatist attitude to our marketing problems after allowing our wheat exports to slip from first place to sixth in the export markets of the world. That situation developed because this government, taking its cue from the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau), has not been aggressive in its approach to the storage, transportation or sale of our grain and has in fact reduced the funds available for research on these problems affecting our farm communities.

[Mr. Muir (Lisgar).]