

Government Orders

Again it sounds like a war, a war against the farmer, as it is today. To defeat the enemy you attack on all fronts, and that is what the government is doing. The enemy in this case seems to be agriculture. I do not think it is the individual farmer, but it is agriculture as we know it today. The structure of agriculture as we know it today is under attack in every part and in every way by this government.

The aim of this Green Paper seems to be to take production out of the hands of the farmer and put it in the hands of the processor, which in most cases means putting it in the hands of the multinationals. If you take enough farmers off the farm and put production in the hands of people who are closely attached to the processors, like Cargill, you have in fact put the effect of production in the hands of that multinational.

If you think that is far-fetched, take a look at the free trade deal. Cargill had people at the top level on both sides of those negotiations. It had advisors at the table on both the U.S. and Canadian sides. So, who got a good deal out of the free trade? Cargill.

This insurance bill is just one spoke in the wheel. It gives very little extra security to the farmer. That is why it is insidious. It seems to improve the situation. It suggests that maybe the farmer is getting a little better deal, when actually he is being conned into a situation where he has given a little and has made it possible for a different approach by the government. Except for a quirk in the process of legislation, the government would have had the ability to withdraw from insurance entirely. The bill does not allow it to do that, but it is not the government's fault that the bill does not allow it to do that. It is the fact that the opposition in the House of Commons made a change.

Nothing is being done to assist the farmer and a great deal is being done to undermine. Nothing is being done about the debt. In Saskatchewan, for example, 20,000 farmers are going to be eliminated or affected by debt during the next year or so. There is nothing in this kind of bill to increase the possibility of them staying on the farm. Who will own and operate these farms when these farmers are forced off the land?

The system is being undermined. I could go into a long story about the effects of government legislation on supply management, the putting in place of quotas. It

makes me a little suspicious all the way around. If they undermine the supply management system by increasing the quotas and saying they are supporting it every time we talk to them, you become a little suspicious about what kind of defence they are making of Article XI at the GATT talks right now.

Nothing seems to be happening regarding the promised money for seeding on the prairies. We all know that the farmers there are waiting for money to seed. It has been promised. We are told that they are looking at it, but nothing is happening. There is nothing on the table, not even a promise that you can take to the bank and ask for some money. The banks are refusing to supply that money for seeding.

• (1210)

Even though I recognize some value in the changes in the crop insurance bill, I cannot support this bill. It is part of the process of destruction of what I know and love of rural Canada. By doing it a little at a time, the government is ensuring that there will eventually be such anarchy in the agricultural industry that it can eventually be dominated by those strengths in this economy which would rather see the control of production in the hands of someone other than the farmer. If this is a move in that direction, neither I nor anyone who loves and believes that rural Canada is worth saving can support it.

Mr. Vic Althouse (Mackenzie): Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the hon. member could expand briefly on his comments with regard to reduction of service and the implementation of fees for service under this government, which carried out a program begun by the previous Liberal government. Perhaps he does not have the numbers in front of him, but could he tell us what this is doing to the actual taxpayers' costs for agriculture and how this is costing farmers even more than the numbers that he utilized in his speech?

I understand that the spending estimates for agriculture have dropped from something like \$3.2 billion two years ago to in the neighbourhood of \$1.8 billion or \$1.9 billion this year. When we take into account the receipts which do not show up as a net figure in the Estimates, the actual cost to the Department of Agriculture is something under \$1 billion this year in terms of government funding. This means that less than 1 per cent of government revenues are going into the whole area of