

Farm Products Marketing Agencies Bill

promoted by 100 farm groups, by 50 farm groups or by 1,000 commodity groups. It has been actively promoted by two or three commodity groups and one major farm organization. I do not blame them for it; they face difficulties and we realize that. They have every right to promote such legislation and to seek government support for it. However, the Minister of Agriculture, on the basis of this sort of support for the bill, should not stand in the House and say that this measure is what agriculture has been seeking for years. Let him not tell us that agribusiness has been pressing for this sort of legislation. This, like many other statements we have heard, simply is not true.

• (3:40 p.m.)

This bill controls all agribusiness such as chemical fertilizer sales, food processing, storage and whatever one buys and sells. All these things come under the terms of the bill. The entire agribusiness of this nation is involved. We are speaking perhaps of a \$40 billion business when we take into account all the labour, all the capital investment and all the segments of the industry that are involved in this measure. We are speaking of a tremendous part of Canada's economy. We in Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition will not allow, if we can prevent it, agriculture to be put in such a confined, legal cage.

An hon. Member: Straitjacket.

Mr. Danforth: Yes, a straitjacket where government directive can control the entire industry. Mr. Speaker, we have seen what government directives can do. Many men seeking employment in the cities, and many families facing hardship such as they have never faced before, find themselves in this position because of directives of this government.

Before I resume my seat I would repeat that it is not the intention of the official opposition in this House to tell the agricultural industry of this nation what it may or may not do. It is our intention to prevent the government doing that. We feel that agricultural businesses combined are in a position, since the livelihood of all those employed in agriculture is involved, to make major decisions concerning the industry and should be left free and unhampered to do so. In this amendment, all we are seeking to do is making certain that those engaged in the production, distribution, sale and storage of agricultural products have an opportunity to decide whether they want a marketing

[Mr. Danforth.]

agency and whether they will allow their businesses to come under the farm council which would be set up under this bill. The decision should be theirs. We shall not throw roadblocks in the way of any commodity group having such an agency, provided that is its wish.

Before concluding I should like to point out that under the provisions of this measure, any production monopoly, be it in respect of broilers, eggs or anything else, would be in a nice, comfortable pew because the government by regulation could prevent any other industry starting up in competition and could prevent any young person starting in the business. This measure will be effected on a nation-wide basis. Under the bill the government could control quotas and production. The reason this measure cannot, and never will, give the producers what they want is—as the minister himself said—that we cannot control imports.

When the minister speaks on this bill I should like him to say yes to the following simple questions: First, under the terms of this bill will the government guarantee that the primary producers will receive more for their products? Second, under the terms of this bill will the government guarantee that the input costs of production will not increase? Third, under the terms of this bill will the government agree that imports will not be allowed to take a part of the domestic market which is allocated under a quota system? Fourth, under the terms of this bill will the consumers of Canada, who are tremendously important and are very interested in this measure, obtain the same quality at no greater price? If the minister can answer yes to all these questions, this bill is very different from that which appears to be.

Mr. Mark Rose (Fraser Valley West): Mr. Speaker, my contribution to the debate on Bill C-197 to establish a National Farm Products Marketing Council will be very brief. Despite the rather attractive wording of the amendment brought forward by the hon. member for Crowfoot (Mr. Horner), the members of the New Democratic Party will oppose it. I believe, however, we can speak in favour of the general principles of the bill. The form in which the bill will appear when it emerges from the committee is another question. I believe that to be in favour of this amendment would be to be in favour of greater duplication. I have a telegram from the prov-