

Farm Products Marketing Agencies Bill

order to give much more freedom to the producers, to decentralize this Council and to wait for the agreement of the provinces before taking any further steps.

If we provide these safeguards, it will considerably ease the problems so that on the whole very few producers would be dissatisfied.

In Quebec, many producers are still involved in an heterogeneous production, which leads us to wonder to what extent the changes following the passage of this bill will add to the worries of a large section of our Quebec producers.

That is why we hope to see this bill amended in order to have all the offices set up by the associations themselves. The latter would elect their own representatives and their operations would be co-ordinated by the provinces. Lastly, all the provinces should be requested to set up the National Council which seems to me quite relevant since we have every reason to anticipate that the take-over by the federal government of this particular field will lead to a failure comparable to the deplorable mess of the Canadian Wheat Board and the Canadian Dairy Commission.

[*English*]

Hon. H. A. Olson (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, I wish to intervene only briefly in the debate to speak to the amendment. I have no intention of making the kind of speech that I would make when closing the debate on the main motion, in other words, of replying in some detail to the many observations made by those who have participated in the debate so far.

I wish to intervene briefly at this time on the amendment because in all the years that I have been in Parliament I do not believe I have ever heard a debate like this one wherein the content of a bill has been so badly misinterpreted. I have listened with a great deal of interest to hon. members opposite. If I had not been closely associated with the development of the bill I would conclude from their remarks that we are proposing a law which opens up a whole new area of public authority, which provides vast new power to the government in the area of marketing farm produce, power which does not already exist. This, of course, is absolutely wrong. I challenge hon. members opposite to find in Bill C-197 any power to control the actions of individuals which is not already to be found in the legislation of the provinces across Canada, which in some cases has been on

their statute books for 30 years, in others for ten years and in still others for 15 years. It is all there, Mr. Speaker.

I wish to give but one example, although I could give several. Hon. members opposite have zeroed in on the government with respect to the provision in the bill which gives the Governor in Council authority to appoint the members of the council and which says that they shall hold office at pleasure, as though this were something new, as though this were some terribly authoritarian type of legislation being presented to the farmers of Canada for the first time.

• (9:30 p.m.)

Mr. Thompson: Two wrongs do not make a right.

Mr. Olson: I should like to draw hon. members' attention to the Farm Products Marketing Act in the Revised Statutes of Ontario, 1960, which has been revised a number of times since then. I have in my hand a consolidation for 1969. What the Ontario legislation refers to as a board in their interpretation is what we refer to as a council in this legislation. This is what it says in section 3 (2):

The board shall consist of one or more persons who shall be appointed by and hold office during the pleasure of the Lieutenant Governor in Council.

That is repeated many times in the provincial legislation. That is already in place in the statutes of the provincial government, and has been there for many many years. At the outset of this debate I attempted to indicate the intention of the government, that this is enabling legislation so that all the provincial marketing boards in existence and those that may come into existence under authority already provided in the statutes of the provinces can co-ordinate their efforts so that they are not working at cross purposes, one province vis-à-vis another or one region vis-à-vis another.

It amazes me, Mr. Speaker, that members opposite, particularly those in the Conservative Party whom I understand hold the same philosophy as the government of Ontario, can zero in on a provision in this bill which is written in exactly the same language as one written into the Ontario statutes about ten years ago.

Mr. Baldwin: You are a much worse government than the Ontario government, that is why.

Mr. Olson: Mr. Speaker, that is not what is provided in the act. The act is written; the