

evident to many non-agricultural corporations in this country.

The point I want to make here is that when this transformation is complete in our own agricultural industry, the consumer will be the loser. We have laws to control the development of monopolistic empires in the major industries in this country. We have laws that specifically prohibit any form of price fixing in the merchandising of consumer goods. Yet, here we have the government laying the groundwork for monopoly in the production of farm products and the ultimate fixing of prices of those products.

Finally, I can point to one more aspect of this bill that will put the consumer squarely over the barrel. The fact is that the consumer has been over the barrel for a very long time in this country what with rising prices, rising inflation and rising unemployment, but here is still another way in which this government can show its arrogance and its disdain for the individual.

Bill C-197 provides for the unrestrained and uncontrolled growth of an enormous new agency to regulate production and marketing of farm products. The cost of this bureaucratic empire will be borne by the producers of farm products according to the provisions of the bill. But we know from the writings of economic experts, and indeed we know from bitter experience, that it is the consumer who ultimately pays the crushing costs of bureaucracy. It is a strange phenomenon that we should experience an unparalleled growth of bureaus, departments and agencies in this country at the federal level, while at the same time this government talks about how it is streamlining the machinery and the processes of government. There is some strange new logic in all of this that is lost to the majority of us. There are increasing signs that this logic is lost on many of the Liberal government backbenchers, and even on the cabinet itself.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I wish to join my colleagues on this side of the House, and all reasonable and compassionate members on the government side, in condemning this latest attempt on the part of an arrogant government to solve a serious problem by pretending that the individual is expendable. The hon. member for Wetaskiwin (Mr. Moore), my seatmate, noted a few days ago that the Canadian farmer epitomizes the spirit of free enterprise, the free spirit of the Canadian individual. I concur wholeheartedly, and I can only hope that Canadian farmers

[Mr. Alkenbrack.]

### *Farm Products Marketing Agencies Bill*

will vent this free spirit in all its might and fury if and when this legislation becomes law. I urge all hon. members in the name of democratic private enterprise to support the amendment moved by the hon. member for Crowfoot (Mr. Horner), and seconded by the hon. member for Palliser (Mr. Schumacher), which vastly improves the bill and gives the farmers of Canada a measure of control and a voice in their productive economy.

**Mr. Jack McIntosh (Swift Current-Maple Creek):** First of all, I want to say that the minister knows as well as I do that the purpose behind Bill C-197 is state control of the agricultural industry, including the livestock industry, which should be of some concern to him and to his constituents in Medicine Hat. I say that if the principle of the bill were to establish a national farm products marketing agency, with adequate producer representation, he would not have encountered too much criticism from this side of the House, except, possibly, from those who represent livestock areas. The livestock people have never endorsed the idea of a marketing board for their branch of the industry, as the minister well knows. Provision should have been made in this bill for any branch of the industry which does not want to be controlled by a marketing board. Marketing through a board should be their choice, not something imposed on them by politicians. This should be the choice of the people engaged in that branch of agriculture.

We on this side of the House have been endeavouring to ascertain whether the principle behind the bill is actually what some farmers and some farm organizations believe it to be. According to information we have on our desks from such organizations as the Federated Agricultural Organizations, this bill establishes a national farm products marketing agency with adequate producer representation. Actually, as a result of studies that have been made, we have found that it is not. In fact, the title of the bill conceals more than it reveals, and the minister, by his efforts, has contributed to this deception. I assume that he has also deceived those organizations which to date have been publicly pushing for this type of legislation on a national basis. I am quite sure that, within a very short time, they will change their minds.

The minister has deliberately tried to conceal from the farmers the immense power the government seeks to obtain over the agricultural industry. The minister knows the pro-