

*Farm Products Marketing Agencies Bill*

gives peanuts to small firms and preferential grants to large companies which could easily do without them.

The same applies to the field of housing. The Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation, which had been created with the best of intentions, now practices discrimination by charging high rates to people who want to build homes for themselves and reduced rates to people who build apartment blocks.

Clause 23 of the present bill, under "Objects and Powers", reads as follows:

Subject to the proclamation by which it is established and to any subsequent proclamation altering its powers, an agency may

(a) purchase any farm product, wherever grown or produced that is of the same kind as the regulated product in relation to which it may exercise its powers, and package, process, store, ship, insure, export or sell or otherwise dispose of any such product purchased by it;

Mr. Speaker, under the provisions of this clause, the government has become a merchant and these are alarming powers since it does not amount to an experiment or to the expectancies before an experiment but merely to the implementation of a method which is in force in Communist countries.

As I said, the government has become a merchant. We know what were the results of such measures in other countries. I have visited Poland, other members have seen Egypt and others Russia. We all know that governments make the worst kind of merchants for they replace the efficiency which stems from work and private initiative with the carelessness and hesitations of civil servants.

We can see further on in Clause 28 a provision which is no less disturbing and reads as follows:

The Minister of Finance may, out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund, on the requisition of the Minister, make grants to an agency not exceeding in the aggregate one hundred thousand dollars to enable the agency to meet initial operating and establishment expenses.

Then the farmers will have to foot the bill, meaning that once the one hundred thousand dollars have been spent to allow the establishment of the agency, farmers will have to pay levies on their products for the upkeep of the bad tradesmen who will have been selected by the state.

This may not be 100 per cent totalitarian, Mr. Speaker, but I feel this is just short of it. It may happen that incompetent purchasers put in bad orders which will require changes at the producers who will automatically be squeezed between order requirements and the obligation to obtain expensive new farm equipment. And the more so because for the majority of them the changes required will be practically impossible to make since their present equipment is not yet all paid for.

Another matter that we should not overlook, Mr. Speaker, is importation. Unless a revision is effected in this sector, the few results expected from this bill will simply be obliterated. If the government absolutely wishes to impose a control, it should not start by planning production but by controlling imports.

[Mr. Godin.]

At this stage may I quote a few excerpts from a brief submitted to the Standing Committee on Agriculture and printed in Minutes of Proceedings No. 50 of September 30 last—by representatives of the Canadian Federation of Agriculture, the Catholic Farmers Union and the Agricultural Federation of Ontario.

On that occasion the executive secretary of the Canadian Federation of Agriculture stated as follows:

The point that Mr. McMaster and Mr. Harris made to us over and over again was that legal experience with these acts which are regulatory acts is that the courts will not presume intent. They will not regulate unless it is laid down exactly what the act is intended to do, with a considerable amount of precision, and that is really the thing that we are after. It is not to change the intent of the proposed act. I think that the wording of the proposed act... makes it clear that the intent is to regulate, but we are worried that we will be able to do what the proposed act intends.

I continue with my quotation:

We are not trying, however, to define rigidly the exact representational system to be set out in the proposed Act. We think that, in fact, with commodity questions and the kind of institution you are setting up, and the purposes which it is to serve, which I will come to, can vary, it is very important not to have inadequate flexibility in approach under this proposed Act.

The view of our organization is that it would be better to leave the authority to appoint agencies and council members with the Governor in Council, but with the requirement that the rules and procedures for this be officially set out, and that there be a legal legislative requirement that these be developed in consultation with producers, so that the thing is dealt with in an orderly way and the methods by which membership is achieved in these agencies and in the Council are set out in a public way.

Let us now refer to page 5 of this brief for a more accurate study. A rather short article can be found here on the purpose of the bill. It is outlined that paragraph 17 of the proposed bill is absolutely essential. This quite accurate article describes the aim of the bill within the framework of the provisions relating to the regulations and further on Mr. David Kirk, the executive secretary, says:

This is regulatory legislation in most of its purposes, and we are advised that there should be, in fact, a place that says:

The purpose and intent of this Act is to provide for the promotion, control and regulation in any or all respects of the transportation, storage and marketing of farm products in interprovincial and export trade including the prohibition of such transportation, packing, storage and marketing in whole or in part.

We think it is very important that this fundamental section go in and I should make the general statement so I will not have to repeat it over and over again, that a great many of these recommendations really have more to do with the precise definition of the powers.

Further on he adds, and I quote:

With respect to the powers of the agency under Clause 23 (1) (d), where there is the power to:

(d) undertake and assist in the promotion of the consumption and use of any regulated product... the improvement of the quality and variety—

We are all in favour of this, but we think it should be promotion of the "production, marketing and consumption". We think it very possible that in some commodities there will be a place for an agency that does not market the product and does not regulate the product, but serves as a very good means of carry-