

Farm Products Marketing Agencies Bill

many big farmers who would not be without such a board. These boards have contributed to the welfare of all farmers and I challenge any hon. member to prove otherwise.

• (4:10 p.m.)

The Wheat Board is a different kind of board again. One cent per bushel goes for running the board and 18 cents, I think, goes toward the marketing of the wheat. The price is set as a result of negotiations in which board representatives take part. That board sells wheat in the world market, although once or twice it has sold wheat in the domestic market. If any of the 19 cents is left over, that money is distributed among the producers. Some say the system is not perfect, but the producers get a lot more than \$1.12 per bushel, the price they got before the board was established. The Wheat Board is doing a good job. We are selling a great deal of wheat at this time, and the government has had something to do with that.

The soybean board is a different kind of board. That board negotiates such things as freight rates, although its services in most cases are purely voluntary. I do not think the soybean board is as strong as it should be. As I said, it is a different kind of board but I would not be without it. I would not grow any crop if I were not protected by a board. I would not even grow something which hon. members opposite could use. Many hon. members have heard me talk about the price of corn. I would not even grow sweet corn without a board to protect me. Hon. members opposite could use some sweet corn; it might sweeten them.

Farmers have nothing to fear from the legislation as it is. The fear has been created by other people, and I have good views on why this has been done. Some people have been told, Mr. Speaker, that this legislation will create socialism. My experience is that, on the contrary, it will stop it because it will definitely protect the little producer from being completely gobbled up by the big one. If anyone tries to tell me that a system that lets big monsters literally eat up little guys because they cannot protect themselves can be called a free enterprise system, they will have a hard time convincing me. You cannot convince me that that is a good form of free enterprise.

Really, what some people want is socialism for the rich and privileged few. They are the people who want to divide the wealth among themselves. All this talk about socialism means that the privileged want to divide the wealth among themselves. At least, that is what some want but not all. Some of the best farmers in Ontario that I know are strong supporters of marketing boards and have been for years. And, by the way, Mr. Speaker, I am sure most members of the House of Commons know that the boards I have talked about are all in Ontario and that practically all were started by a Conservative government which, by the way, recently received the largest mandate ever given to any government in Ontario. They are the protectors of free enterprise.

Mr. Ricard: Is that why the hon. member voted for them?

Mr. Whelan: I beg your pardon?

[Mr. Whelan.]

Mr. Ricard: Is that why the hon. member voted Conservative?

Mr. Alexander: The hon. member should be honest. He is scared stiff of the NDP.

Mr. Whelan: The facts speak for themselves. The Ontario government recognized the need. That government knew there was a need for marketing boards. The Ontario Minister of Agriculture, Hon. William A. Stewart, has also recognized the need for national marketing boards. That is what he said before the committee of this House. One should not forget what he said in the election campaign. He did not blame the Liberals in Ottawa for the lack of such national boards. He said that if the farmers of Ontario are in trouble, it is because of "those people in Ottawa." He was charitable to the official opposition. He did not want to blame them; he was too much of a politician. He merely blamed "those people in Ottawa," and everybody took it for granted that it was the Liberals who were holding up the legislation. The record speaks for itself. Unfortunately, the average farmer in Ontario does not read the record; he is much too busy working.

This legislation, Mr. Speaker, so far as I am concerned is designed to help all our farmers to become equal Canadians. It will at least give them the opportunity to become equal partners in our agricultural industry.

Mr. McCleave: Come, now.

Mr. Whelan: I think I know as well as anyone in this House what farmers really want. From the long association I have enjoyed with the farm organizations across Canada, I think I know what most Canadian farmers really want.

Mr. Korchinski: Is that why the hon. member turned Liberal?

Mr. Whelan: I hear hon. members opposite making comments. I have been in the hon. member's part of Canada and I tell him that I think the vast majority of farmers in Saskatchewan are in favour of national marketing legislation. As I said, this legislation will help farmers to become equal Canadians in our economy. It will give them the opportunity to become equal partners in our agricultural industry, if they want to take that step.

The hon. member for Lambton-Kent said, "Do not shove this bill down our throats." We are not shoving anything on anybody. We are making this law available to those who want to use it, that is all. I hear much talk about free enterprise, yet who wants to apply the sort of system that applies to no other industry to agriculture, when one knows the chaos agriculture is in?

Let us talk about the trucking industry. Why do not hon. members on the other side, for example, buy some trucks and start a trucking business? They cannot go into the trucking business because they cannot get a PCV licence. Let people try to walk a dog down the streets without a licence. Why do they not start an airline or a radio station? They cannot go into the radio business without a licence. You can see what happens, yet hon. members insist on talking about free enterprise in agriculture. That is the trouble. Agriculture has been free for everybody.