

Farm Products Marketing Agencies Bill

market place. If perfect competition is carried to its logical conclusion the result is bankruptcy. Any group of businessmen who possibly can avoid perfect competition do so, because the result of it is ruin.

We have the example of the Canadian Wheat Board. We have heard people say many times that we should let the Wheat Board go into the markets of the world and sell wheat for whatever it would bring. At a meeting which I held in western Canada a farmer said, "If you do that how far will we go down; what will the end be"? I said to him that I do not know how far down it would go. I do not believe anybody else knows the answer. In this situation we would have perfect competition, and when you have adequate supplies and perfect competition there is a long way to go. So I should like some government member or the minister, either while this debate continues on second reading or after the bill goes to the standing committee, to tell us what the objectives of this bill are in respect of income for the farmer and what the pricing policies are to be.

As we know, under the support policies of this government, there is some support in respect of beef, hogs and so on. This support is very small. It is set low because there is no control over the volume of product as there would be if the government should raise the support price and have to buy the product. So, the support price is kept very low. This bill, however, proposes to institute supply management. The intent is to control the volume of product that will come on the market, the manner in which it will be handled and the manner in which it will be marketed. If the farmer is to be controlled to that extent by a bill such as this, he is entitled to a fair price. If he were to be left alone to sink or swim, then maybe there would be some justification in saying that we will not do anything about pricing.

Perhaps we could tell farmers they can produce what they like and then they would be on their own. But if we introduce legislation of this type to establish a policy of supply management, then the farmer is entitled to know what is to be done about price and income. This is the essence of the Dairy Commission operation. This is the only way they can justify what they are doing to the producer. In return, the Dairy Commission says the producer will not go broke. That is the essence of it. There is a similar situation here. We are saying these things to the pro-

[Mr. Gleave.]

ducer and at the same time we should be willing to tell him what we intend to do about price and income.

[Translation]

Mr. C.-A. Gauthier (Roberval): Mr. Speaker, I should not want to miss this opportunity to say a few words on Bill C-197 to establish a National Farm Products Marketing Council.

At first sight, this bill, like all the others, seems to make sense. It seems it would be wise to create a National Farm Products Marketing Council. But it is always in the application of legislation that we are taken for a ride and this bill is a classical example of all the legislation introduced by this government since it came to power.

The setting up of councils, royal commissions, boards and other bodies means further expenditures. In addition, the government certainly has many friends to bring in and I presume all appointments will be made by the government itself at the cabinet level. That is exactly what I am concerned about in connection with this bill.

• (4:20 p.m.)

As a matter of fact, when you read the Governor General's recommendation, you note that, having dealt with the establishment of the Council, it goes on to salaries, fees and expenses. It never fails. That has to come first. The recommendation then deals with the organization of the Council and its staff, with the expenditures to be paid out of moneys appropriated by Parliament therefor, and with the creation, if necessary, of marketing agencies for farm products.

If the National Council is unable to advise the minister adequately, agencies will be created. In this connection I would like to quote in part the recommendation:

—to provide that the agencies shall conduct their operations on a self-sustaining financial basis without appropriations therefor by Parliament;

It is said that the agencies will be self-sustaining. This means they will not be swayed by money. It is said further that the government may grant a certain amount of money, and I quote:

—to enable the agency to meet initial operating and establishment expenses, the aggregate amount of such grants not to exceed one million dollars.

And that is how the government establishes the agency. It reminds me of the way Information Canada was established. In my opinion, it will be another agency like Information Canada, for the purpose of selling government policy to farmers.