

Farm Products Marketing Agencies Bill

sition—the result being that the whole legislative process is rapidly becoming a farce—by the scarcely veiled attacks on the Auditor-General and by many other actions.

It was with this in mind that I instigated some time ago, in co-operation with other hon. members, the establishment of a special committee to investigate these dangerous and growing problems and to propose some remedies.

An hon. Member: Another committee?

Mr. Baldwin: This would be a useful device if this bill were to be passed, and I am sure it will be passed despite my conviction that a great many government supporters are not happy about it.

Mr. Olson: Wrong again.

Mr. Baldwin: When the vote comes, I am afraid they will either be absent or will not stand up and reassert their views of it.

Mr. Olson: Oh, no.

Mr. Baldwin: I hope I am wrong. I hope that when the crisis comes, when we vote on the amendment placed before the House by the hon. member for Crowfoot, an amendment that seeks to bring back to the House the authority which the House ought to have but which has been taken away piece by piece by this government, some hon. members on the government side will have the courage of their convictions and will stand up and vote with us.

• (9:10 p.m.)

As I say, if the proposals contained in the report of the special committee on the subject of regulation were in effect, I would feel a little safer. But seven months have gone by and the report is still gathering dust. No attempt has been made to implement it. I have asked the President of the Privy Council (Mr. Macdonald), the Prime Minister and others whether they intend to implement the recommendations this session. We are now about six weeks from the end of the session but there is no sign of a bill being brought forward. I am confident we shall reach the end of the session without action being taken and that these excellent recommendations agreed upon by members of all parties will go down the drain.

Now to deal with this bill and its defects in more detail. Clause 2 says that "farm product" means any natural product of agriculture, that "marketing plan" means a market-

ing plan relating to the marketing of any such product, and that there can be established a system for the licensing of those engaged in the production or marketing of regulated products. Mr. Speaker, if it is not intended to license people, why introduce such a clause? It could only have been done in order to make sure that those who are not licenced shall not be allowed to produce. The minister cannot convince the House that the bill does not provide for the regulation, licensing and control of those engaged in the production of agricultural products.

Provision is made for the establishment of a marketing council whose members are to be appointed by the government at its pleasure. What measure of independence can be possessed by a body whose members are appointed by the government during pleasure? If judges were appointed to our courts on such a basis, what safety would there be for litigants, particularly showed a case involve litigation against the government? The pay these members are to receive is to be prescribed by the government. The same will apply to the personnel of the agencies which are to be established.

Clause 7 provides that the council shall inquire into the merits of establishing an agency only if directed to do so by the minister. Under the terms of clause 12, the minister does not need to execute an inquiry into the merits of any plan. Without reference to the council or anyone else the government can establish an agency and place a marketing plan before it. When we get into committee, and again on the report stage, we shall have an opportunity to draw attention once more to the weaknesses and dangers of this legislation. We shall show that it is exactly as has been described by every member who has spoken on behalf of this party. The measure in its present form gives to the government powers which no government should possess, unless from time to time Parliament is able to ask what is being done with those powers, to challenge their use effectively and, if necessary, to change them.

I know the government takes a different view. The other day, the minister, speaking on this bill, said the people elected the government. What an odd view of democracy to take! The people elect members of this House of Commons. That is the principle upon which parliamentary government operates. It is true that this having been done, the largest body of members establishes a government. But the people do not elect the government. This type of thinking has led to a lot of