

Government Orders

put the industry under the jurisdiction of the Farm Products Marketing Agency Act.

I was very shocked a little over a week ago by a speech made to the United States Senate Agriculture Committee. The Secretary of Agriculture in the United States indicated that he was going to write the agriculture policy not only for the European common market and his own country but for Canada, Australia, Argentina and Brazil.

I have to wonder if between this task force report, which had very little farm input, and the statement by the Secretary of Agriculture of the United States, that is why we are seeing all of these bills coming forward in this session of Parliament, bills that will tear down those structures which have served this industry so well for so many years.

It is not hard to tear things down, but it takes a lot of imagination, foresight and determination to build them back up again or to establish them in the first place. It is for this reason that I think this government should have thought a little longer and a little harder about the changes here in Bill C-48, an act to amend the Crop Insurance Act.

If we are truly partners in this country, if we are partners of Confederation, I think it should be done in a manner that involves both levels of government and the producers in an equal way. We all have responsibilities to ensure that there are adequate supplies of high quality Canadian grown food available for our consumers. We also have a responsibility to make sure that we not only have these supplies of food, but that there is a continuing supply and that the infrastructure is in place for farmers five or ten years from now to make their way into the industry and to continue that supply based on the concept of the family farm operation.

• (1640)

Dr. John Kenneth Galbraith, who was born in Elgin County, Ontario, and attended the University of Guelph, pointed out to us in October when he was in Glencoe in my riding that the family farm is the most reliable form of food production and probably the most efficient that we have in the world today. It is part of our economy and part of our social fabric, and to allow this to be undermined and destroyed is not acceptable, particularly here in Canada.

I want to say that I hope the government will reconsider what it has here in this legislation. I am pleased to see that it has gone ahead with the increased coverage up to 90 per cent. To allow the government to cut back on its share of the premium from 50 per cent to 25 per cent is definitely not acceptable.

The provinces have increased their share from strictly administration costs up to a level of 25 per cent. I think the federal government should help the producers roll back their input costs at a time when they are facing such financial hardship.

The input costs to the farmers have not decreased. In fact, they have actually increased in spite of the fact the world grain prices dropped dramatically in the summer and fall of 1984. They dropped dramatically in Canada and in some other countries, not through any fault of the producers themselves, but through the fault of governments that failed to respond to world conditions.

There are no big surpluses of grain, no unmanageable surpluses of grain. Because trade has fallen into fewer and fewer hands and the element of greed has made those corporations look for larger and larger profits, the farmer has been at the low end of the totem pole.

In conclusion, I simply ask the government to abandon this Nielsen task force report on agriculture, to stop and listen to what the producers of Canada are saying and to make the amendment to this bill that is acceptable to the farm organizations that contacted us over the last summer.

Mr. Stan J. Hovdebo (Saskatoon—Humboldt): Madam Speaker, things are not great in the agricultural industry these days. The position taken by the government on most issues, many of which were just mentioned by the member for Lambton—Middlesex, have not increased the confidence of residents of rural Canada that they are going to get anything better in the future.

Farming is an integral part of rural Canada, but the feeling of being abandoned by the government, by society to a great extent, extends from one coast to the other and through all kinds of rural communities. Regardless of what part of the country you visit, if you go to small town rural Canada, you will find a feeling of being abandoned. As Newfoundlander Gerald Smith from Port au Port put it, people in decision-making circles in this