

The Address—Mr. Peters

prices. Commodities flowing into the export field would have to be handled by the federal producers marketing board.

It should be possible to draft this type of program so that producers in various areas could take advantage of different degrees of government participation. It might be, for instance, that producers in a given area of Canada would want only to be able to assemble the commodity and market it with a minimum amount of government participation in the pricing field. It may be that others would want more substantial government participation. The program should be flexible enough to accommodate these area differences.

To summarize: (1) The plan is designed to give maximum marketing power to the producer of the commodity. This would be done by giving the producer marketing board of the commodity in question responsibility and authority to rationalize the production of the commodity and to assemble it into position, and also by giving the producers the power to rationalize price in relation to farm costs and levels of farm income, and to become more effective in bargaining for that price.

(2) The plan is designed to let the consumer benefit from an abundance of supply by allowing the consumer price to decline in the face of strong production.

(3) The difference between the price the consumer pays and the price the producer requires is to be made up by deficiency payments.

(4) This program would not be implemented until the producer marketing boards were organized on an area and commodity basis representing a majority of the production.

I do not expect that all the farm representatives have been able to follow this proposal—

Mr. Charlton: May I ask the hon. member a question? I wonder if he would care to say from what he is quoting?

Mr. Peters: I am quoting from my own notes. The proposal has been designed and adopted by the national council of the New Democratic party as a plank in their agricultural program.

I am quite happy that there should be a few chuckles. This is a program in relation to only one aspect of a long range plan that will assist the farmers of Canada. The New Democratic party is not the only body interested in farming which is concerned with this problem. This year the national farmers union made a submission to the government on January 31, and on the subject of personal ownership, said that they were interested in personal ownership as applied to farmers and the farm community. I quote from page 5 of the submission:

[Mr. Peters.]

To halt the artificially promoted trend to bigness and vertical integration, farmers will have to seek remedies in the marketplace.

The report of the restrictive trade practices commission of August 3, 1961, indicates that the three largest meat packing companies together slaughter more than 60 per cent of all the cattle and more than 60 per cent of all the hogs in Canada. The report says that the position of the largest of the three, namely, Canada Packers Limited, in the market is so dominant that it is against the public interest and to the detriment of both producers and consumers.

Correspondence of the company, quoted by the director of investigation in his statement of evidence, shows that the company is trying to eliminate competition and break markets.

There is no doubt in our minds that the concentration of so much market power in one corporation is against the public interest and constitutes a definite threat to the survival of the family farm.

Short of bringing the three largest meat packing companies under public ownership, we can conceive of only one other measure to limit this power, namely, to give farmers countervailing power in the marketplace.

We, therefore, urge your government to use the power given it by section 95 of the British North America Act to enact enabling legislation providing for the establishment of national marketing boards with mandatory powers and controls over the marketing of commodities produced on farms, including those owned or operated by processors, distributors and manufacturers.

National marketing boards will do much to limit the abuses and antisocial practices of monopoly power in the market place as evidenced by the restrictive trade practices commission in its recent investigation into the meat packing industry.

It is not sufficient to speak of the need for establishing national marketing agencies or boards. The government advocates a national power grid but will do nothing until the provinces have committed themselves. The position is no different in agriculture. We suggest the establishment of a national marketing board to handle agricultural commodities and regulate their distribution in the interests of the producer and consumer. This beneficial objective can be met only through the government spelling out a program which I invite all hon. members to consider and support.

To make it abundantly clear that we are sincere in advancing this proposal I move, seconded by the hon. member for Vancouver East (Mr. Winch):

That the following paragraph be added to the address:

"This house regrets that Your Excellency's advisers have failed to give agricultural producers proper and countervailing power in the market place through, among other things, taking steps to provide for national marketing boards."

Hon. J. M. Macdonnell (Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, I suppose this is what we have to expect, and we must just take it with all the equanimity we can muster.

Mr. Benidickson: Filling in a vacuum.