

cation. They want an opportunity to function more efficiently under the free enterprise system. They want an opportunity to become more productive under the free enterprise system, and they want an opportunity to derive a just and equitable return from their labours and their investments.

The hon. member for Vegreville (Mr. Mazankowski) has pointed out that the vast majority of farmers in this country have been the victims in recent years of monopolistic practices on the part of the larger, organized producers who co-opt the market along with the powerful retailer groups. When this bill was tabled by the government I am certain in my own mind the farmers thought that at long last someone was about to put the agricultural house in order. At long last, they thought they would have a voice in the decision making councils and would have a hand in the framing of policies for their own industry. What a sad awakening, Mr. Speaker, for these people who have waited so long for this government to acknowledge that they, the farmers, have as much right as anyone else to expect a decent break from this government.

I must point out, as my colleagues have stressed before me, that there is no provision in Bill C-197 for farmer representation on the Farm Products Marketing Council, or on the boards of any of the agencies that will be established by the council. There is no provision in the bill for avenues of appeal from arbitrary and onerous actions and decisions on the part of agency inspectors. As the inspectors terms of reference are vaguely written and without specified reasonable limits, I am concerned and apprehensive for the future of the small farmer. I am concerned that the farmers of this country will be encouraged to revolt rather than submit to confiscation and oppression.

At this point in time there is a general feeling among farmers, and among members of this House who are close to the agricultural scene, that the government is determined to accelerate the exodus of farmers into the cities in an effort to reduce the number of farms in this country to a hard core of economic units. This will result in more unemployment. This might be considered a wise and even necessary move in the light of statistics which show that there are thousands of farmers across the country who are barely subsisting. But, Mr. Speaker, the various makeshift and ad hoc programs that the government has initiated to ease the burden on farmers who are forced off the land are less

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than adequate, and in many cases the farmers are worse off after they leave their farms.

• (4:40 p.m.)

There are various programs designed to retrain farmers in job skills that are expected to fit them for employment in cities and towns. When the farmers are retrained they discover that the jobs they were trained for do not exist. If training farmers to become skilled labourers and tradesmen were the answer to uneconomic farm operations, then where are the jobs for which they are trained? There are more than half a million adult unemployed in this country, and the number is climbing steadily. I submit, Mr. Speaker, that what we are doing is adding to the number of skilled unemployed in the country. Is it better to have skilled unemployed ex-farmers than to have unskilled, unemployed ex-farmers? I think, whatever the answer might be to this problem, Bill C-197 is not it. I do not think that accelerating the exodus of farmers from the land with the lure of new skills is the answer at this time. A better answer would be to put some of the expenditure, and most of the effort, into programs that would allow farmers to stay on the land until realistic and workable programs of resettlement can be worked out. At a time when the government is creating more unemployment instead of attempting to create jobs, it is a classic application of reverse logic to train farmers for jobs that do not exist and will not exist until something is done to stimulate the Canadian economy.

I would like to touch briefly on one more aspect of Bill C-197 that troubles me, and one that further widens the credibility gap between the government and the people. This concerns the obvious intent of the government to create a monopoly of large corporate producers of farm products. Bill C-197 plays directly into the hands of the large producers and further inhibits the survival of the small, family size farm.

Since the Farm Products Marketing Council will have absolute control over the producers of farm products through its own authority as the supreme marketing body and through its agencies, it can be seen that in time all production of farm products will be in the hands of a few large farms and, to a large extent, in the hands of a few conglomerates. There are hundreds of thousands of acres of agricultural land in the hands of giant corporations and conglomerates in the United States, and the attractiveness of such holdings is becoming