

groups at the last agricultural congress. This bill has all the earmarks of being one of the most dictatorial, coercive and restrictive measures that Canadian agriculture or any other industry has had presented to it, even in times of extreme national emergency. Let us look at what the bill provides, what it means to the farmer and the whole of the food industry right on down to the consumers.

In my opinion the minister is not being frank in presenting to the House Bill C-197. To the joint convention of the Farmers Union of Alberta and the Alberta Federation of Agriculture on March 24, 1970, he said:

National marketing agencies will not be set up until it is demonstrated that there is a wide producer consensus on the needs for them. It will not be the role of government alone to actively work for and organize that consensus. It will require the assistance of the producers themselves, through their organizations, such as this one.

We are creating the machinery. It will be up to the producers to use it.

With careful planning, national marketing agencies represent, I feel, an opportunity for Canadian producers to get together for stable, orderly marketing, of their products. That they will work only with your support.

In the House on second reading of the bill, the Minister of Agriculture stated, as reported at page 5868 of *Hansard*:

I would like to set the preamble to that discussion by making the comment that the situation that we have respecting the marketing of foreign products in Canada, in my view at least, makes it at least desirable, if not essential, that we have enabling legislation on the statute books, that is, authorities from parliament for the government to respond from time to time to the request of a substantial majority of producers in this field.

The minister has implied in his statements that he is expressing popular sentiment, but this is far from the black and white, statute power that he is asking for in Bill C-197. This bill establishes a very central, severely controlled establishment.

What are the centralization features of the bill? First, the Governor in Council may by proclamation establish an agency with powers relating to any farm product or farm products in interprovincial trade that are not regulated pursuant to the Canadian Wheat Board Act or Dairy Commission Act. Second, the National Farm Marketing Council members are to be appointed by the government at their pleasure. They will be full-time civil servants at the pleasure of the government. What a chance for political appointees to have a haven for a lifetime if the government party remains in power!

Farm Products Marketing Agencies Bill

The duties of the council as stated in the bill will be broad. It will advise the minister on the establishment and operation of farm products marketing agencies and will review their operations on a continuing basis. The council will consult with the provinces on the operation of interprovincial agencies and exercise control over such commodities that are offered in interprovincial marketing channels or for export. The council will be free to evaluate the necessity or desirability of establishing marketing agencies or of broadening the authority of any existing agency. The council has the power to direct any producers of farm products for interprovincial export sales to register with the council or appropriate agency and to maintain books and records in relation to products grown. The producer will be required to produce these records on demand.

● (5:30 p.m.)

Now, in one of the provisions of the bill it states that a public hearing may be held—I emphasize the word “may”—if the council so decides. It is not required to hold public hearings, but may do so at the whim of the council. What does all this mean? It means that, regardless of the wording of Bill C-197, the cabinet has monopoly power to regulate agriculture at will. The agencies will likely be developed and administered exclusively by government officials. Public hearings do not have to be held. There is no assurance consumers and producers would receive direct or satisfactory attention from such hearings. There is no assurance that the government would in any way follow what the interested parties wanted done as expressed at any public hearings that might be held.

The bill imposes severe and heavy restriction on the farmers. I am sure that when the full import of Bill C-197 reaches the farm community, it will have little support. By means of this bill the government, by itself, can regulate authoritatively all aspects of food production, distribution and marketing. It invites a central and statist administration with an all-pervasive scope over supply and market management. This is what the government is asking for and it is not what farmers have been requesting. In the federal task force report on supply management and national marketing boards it is stated:

The major political problem is that the national marketing board would have to be responsible to the federal government since it cannot be responsible to eleven legislatures. It is true that the government of Canada could attempt to create advisory councils and to consult the provincial departments of agriculture, but ultimate authority