

Government Orders

As well, we saw under free trade the loss of the two-price wheat system. We were told that was going to be compensated for, and nowhere do I find in the government's financial plans for the future that that particular promise is going to be kept either.

Later this week we will debate again the bill that we gave second reading to under closure, the plant breeders' rights bill, again another bill that opens up the whole industry of agriculture, the whole farm community, to increasing threat from large corporations and increasing corporate control of that sector.

Then I had the pleasure, I guess, of attending the press conference in my own city of Prince Albert when the Minister of Agriculture and the provincial ministers of agriculture announced their new policy on agriculture. There were a couple of very key words in there that certainly anybody who follows agriculture debates heard very clearly, namely, that the new look of agriculture was to be; one, market-driven; and two, self-reliant. It is very easy to find words that to the average Canadian sound as if they represent progress. Who is going to be against markets? Well I guess some people are, but certainly nobody is against self-reliance.

What that obviously has come to mean in the context of the government's other activities is that the historic foundation of agriculture in this country, the family farm, is something that this government is perfectly willing to abandon. Every action this government takes in the field of agriculture makes that more and more clear.

I think family farmers are starting to realize that they are being abandoned, that they are being left behind, that this government is doing whatever it can to hasten the corporate concentration in agriculture, to hasten the industrialization of the agriculture sector. What is really frustrating is that farmers always feel like they are fighting rearguard actions because the government is saying one thing, that, yes, the family farm is sacred, and, yes, it is doing what it can to assist and support the family farm, but all the actions run the other way.

It is becoming very frustrating and very tiring for family farmers to constantly fight these rearguard actions against the government that will not come clean on what its actual agenda is. I am sure there are a lot of

members opposite, a lot of farm members in particular, who are starting to realize as well that what this government says is much different from what this government does.

In that regard I would like to offer some evidence that this frustration is not just something that comes out of what might be termed the left wing of the farm movement or out of the Official Opposition or the NDP. This whole frustration with the direction this government is taking in agriculture is shared every bit as much by its own members, its own grassroots members.

I would like to quote from *The Western Producer*, a paper with a circulation of approximately 130,000 a very important farm paper. My copy is a little bit worn by now because I have been showing it to all my colleagues from other parts of Canada, especially my urban colleagues because they often do not have the opportunity to know what is being said about government programs in the farm press.

I thought this article was very important because it was a report from the P.C. policy convention earlier this last August which was billed in the mainstream media as being very much a love-in; that there was very little dissent, that people were happy, they had vision for the future and they were going to ride the great economic boom well into the 21st century, that all kinds of good things were going to happen and all the delegates there were very pleased with everything they saw.

This headline, first of all, caught my eye. It said: "Rural PCs line up at convention to air their gripes". I went on to read:

Conservative farm policies were attacked last week by rural delegates attending the Progressive Conservative national convention.

They said despite official government optimism and self-congratulations, conditions are bad down on the farm. And government policy is driving rural voters away from Conservatives, they warned.

There was scarcely a word of praise for past government performance or the new theology of market-oriented, subsidy-reduced farm policy being developed and promoted by agriculture minister Don Mazankowski.

As Mazankowski sat in the audience listening, delegate after delegate came to the microphone to complain about the state of the farm economy.