

Farm Products Marketing Agencies Bill

It should also be borne in mind that the changes which are being made, including the amendment we are debating, are fundamental to the operation of the family farm. In this connection may I say I was pleased to read in last Saturday's edition of the *Ottawa Citizen* an article by a writer, Paul Grescoe, entitled "Goodbye to the family farm". This article was particularly interesting in light of the debate on this bill and the amendments, and I would like to quote two or three paragraphs from it. It reads, in part:

Canada—which once brought thousands of immigrants from Europe to farm the land and build the country—is now allowing its family farms to die.

And their death is being officially encouraged by the federal government.

Ottawa wants to ease small, low income farmers off their land. The *Financial Times* recently explained the government's reasoning: the federal Department of Agriculture believes that Canada can support no more than 150,000 farms, this means that 250,000 farms must go.

That underlines our fear about passing this bill, and that is the reason for the hon. member's amendment. We are interested in those 250,000 farmers. Where do they go? As long ago as six or seven years I saw letters from leaders of the Liberal party indicating it was their intention to eliminate the small family farm, and to turn agriculture in Canada into an economic agribusiness.

With respect to the first amendment dealing with the removal of a number of products, I must ask who is making all the fuss about the products. It is not the little farmer who does not have much say in any marketing structure: it is those who are producing in an agribusiness, and in many cases over-producing.

One of the former speakers who just made a comment is one of those who got into trouble by overproduction in the free enterprise system, who produced until the price went down and until his own friends went out of business. I am told the same thing would have happened to him had he not found an advantageous sale and managed to overcome his difficulties. We have to decide who will be served by this bill.

If 250,000 farmers are moved off the farm the argument will be made that it is because their holdings are uneconomic. As pointed out in this article part of which I quoted, the average income from that class of farm across Canada is \$2,800. This is a disgrace because it means we would be paying them welfare in the cities. They are living on farms because they have decided this is a good way of life. They have clean air, fresh vegetables and many of the advantages of a quiet, slow moving life. They live there in dignity and raise their families in dignity. We have moved them into the cities because we cannot keep them in the rural economy. There are no jobs for them in the cities, yet they cannot stay on the farms.

• (3:40 p.m.)

If you move them into the city they will have to live on an income of \$4,000, in poverty and with no personal dignity. There is no future for them there. Who will be left on the farms? Kraft will be left on the farms, where it will have control of the cheese industry in this count through its own form of marketing legislation. Kraft is in a position to buy cheese in the area from the wholesaler at 80 cents a pound, which is one cent more than the price of

butter in that area. I suggest that that is unreasonable. You can produce twice as much cheese from butterfat as you produce butter; therefore the conclusion is that Kraft has raised the price of that commodity to the consumer in an unreasonable way.

An hon. Member: No.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Perhaps this might be a good point at which to interrupt the hon. member. I confess I am not sure to what extent the remarks he is making now are related to the motion before the House. It may well be that they are. The hon. member has a knowledge of agricultural matters which is second to none, and certainly much greater than mine, and perhaps as he pursues his remarks he will indicate how his comments are related to the motion now before us.

Mr. Peters: I shall be pleased to do that, Mr. Speaker. Perhaps the argument is complicated, but the amendment removes from the plan such things as animals, meats, eggs, poultry, wool, maple products, honey and any part of any such product. The producer would have no control over any part of any such commodity as maple, sugar, hams, bacon, cheese or butter, because the bill says "any part of any such product". I presume cheese and butter are by-products of animals, and if we remove these we will only be controlling farm products, meaning any natural products of agriculture. Obviously we are not referring to bacon and pork, and we would not be talking about cheese and butter, because these are by-products of animals or natural products of agriculture. In themselves they are not natural products although they might be referred to as products of the cottage industry.

I singled out the Kraft Company because it is agribusiness at its best. Certainly everybody can use different examples. In the province of Quebec farm representatives are not talking about farmers, they are talking about Granby Co-op. They are talking about the monopoly which that particular organization has now in the province of Quebec. They can go into the broiler industry and can put it completely on the rocks, as they did, or they can go into any of the other fields, because they have a vertically integrated operation which bears no relationship to the family farm.

The point that I am making is that while that may be good business for the Liberal party, while they may believe in agribusiness and in large farms being good and size being the prime requirement—

Mr. Mazankowski: No.

Mr. Peters: My hon. friend says "no". Let me read an article that reveals what the Minister of Manpower and Immigration (Mr. Lang) said about it before he became minister. Eight years ago he hinted at what was to become of the federal government's policy to kill Canada's small farm units. He is now minister in charge of the Canadian Wheat Board, but when he was law professor speaking to graduates of agriculture at the University of Saskatchewan in Saskatoon he had this to say:

"The family farm is not entitled to subsidy," he said. "Should those living on farms be subsidized by non farmers to bring their economic level to that of non farmers? Clearly not. The farmers are receiving non economic benefits to make up the difference."