

No country has sustained a successful agriculture without handing back to the soil something of what you rob from it.

Every country in the world in the last few years has changed its economy. From Scandinavia in the north to Italy in the south we have seen import restrictions imposed, land reform, bonused production, and other devices which have changed the whole front of the wheat market of the world. A greater degree of self-sufficiency seems to be considered sound economics in the different countries of the world to-day. Security of supply in the face of a possible world crisis seems to have been the dominant factor in the policy of Germany and Italy and even the old land herself. Europe has almost ceased to buy our wheat, and we are challenged to find new markets and substitutes for our wheat. State after state, faced with the problem of disposing of its surpluses, have established virtual monopolies in marketing services with the whole resources of the country behind them.

We have now before us Bill No. 89. I am not going to censure the Minister of Agriculture for introducing this bill. I know he is trying to do something. Heaven knows that after four years in power, and now facing the people, he would at last try to do something. But I wish to point out to him that the venture of this dominion to control the world price of wheat a few years ago did not succeed. The coffee venture of Brazil to control the price was not very successful a few years ago. The control of cotton prices in the United States was not very successful a few years ago. Now we have before us a bill which will not solve the problem. Costly and ineffective price-fixing systems, to be applied to local conditions, cannot be undertaken without adding to the load of the already over-burdened taxpayers. The money necessary to guarantee minimum prices and to make grants in aid will certainly come eventually from the farmers by visible or invisible taxation.

This is typical pre-election legislation, a bid to everyone, a gesture to all. This bill vests in the minister power to make regulations governing its operation. For example, the minister, and the minister alone, can say where and how the statute shall be applied. He, and he alone, may make regulations prescribing the manner in which the average price for a product shall be ascertained. The minister, and the minister alone, may establish the proportion of primary producers in any one geographical area the products of which are to be marketed under a plan of a guaranteed

initial price. The minister and the minister alone, shall decide the proportion of an agricultural product, in any designated area, that shall be marketed under a system of a guaranteed initial price. The minister, and the minister alone, shall decide the time or times when payment subsequently to the initial payment shall be made. The minister, and the minister alone, is given full authority to extend or withhold the legislation if and when he sees fit.

This bill is nothing more or less than a blank cheque for the minister to fill out in expedient rations as he sees fit. It substitutes government by arbitrary will for government by law.

The purpose of Bill No. 89 is to guarantee to primary producers who bind themselves into a cooperative association an initial price for their products not to exceed 80 per cent of the average wholesale price of such products over the three years preceding the year of production, and if, on account of uncontrollable conditions, the market price obtained for such products falls below the established minimum figure, the difference will be made up by the treasury. When the market price is higher than the guaranteed initial price, the producers in the cooperative association are to share in the surplus.

Under this bill, worn-out acres will compete with fertile soil; the scrawny and thin hog will compete with the fat and finished hog; the diseased tree will compete with the healthy tree; and the market will be flooded with inferior crops, all of which will be harder to dispose of, bringing a lower price and accordingly demanding a greater share of this peculiar federal assistance.

A few of the needs of agriculture may be alleviated by intelligent legislative control but by and large the salvation of the farmer is to be worked out in one spot alone, and by one person alone, namely, the farmer himself on his farm. The biggest thing this government can do is to help the farmer to help himself, by assisting him, not only to produce better products but to market them in better ways to meet world competition.

An hon. MEMBER: What about the home market?

Mr. ROWE (Dufferin-Simcoe): What have my friends opposite done for the home market? They have allowed foreign countries to build up their markets instead of helping us to build up our home market here.

The soundness of a policy such as is incorporated in the bill is questionable because it is a policy that puts all the