

Farm Products Marketing Agencies Bill

everything to please the farmers. But then we will move in closer and closer until we have agriculture well taped, efficient, strong and competitive.

Mr. Danforth: Competitive with what?

Mr. Bigg: I wonder if there is anything in this bill which will make things more comfortable for the producer who, in the final stages, has to produce the goods. Is he going to be mentally happy? Is he going to be better fed? I know he can get his eggs sold at so many cents a dozen, but I also know many farmers who do not care so much about how much they are actually taking home but who do want to be allowed to run their own affairs and live on their own land. Some of them are working harder for less pay than a great many other people who are telling them to be strong, efficient and competitive.

These farmers have been strong, efficient and competitive and they look to us to tell them when the pay off will be. They ask us: "When are we going to be able to pay off the loans which you people gave us over the last 10 years?" They refer to us in the opposition as much as to those on the other side. They say: "You gave us large loans. At one time the interest rate was only 5 per cent, now it is 9 per cent or 10 per cent". We encouraged these farmers to borrow money, now they want to know how to pay it back and to become strong, efficient and competitive beyond words. We now see wheat piled up in mountains. We have dug up the phosphates from under the ground and we have made the prairies grow more grain than my father and my grandfather dreamed could be produced on those arid plains.

Now, the benevolent government says that all they have to do is to turn the whole thing over to them. The farmers must do what they are told without any representation on this council and everything will then be rosy. They do not believe it. I do not think it is any secret that some men whom I have considered to be socialistic are completely shocked by some aspects of this bill. They say it goes too far. There may be some benefits in socialist legislation but this goes too far, they say. They are some of the most open critics of the dictatorial powers granted under this bill.

I must say I was agreeably surprised to find that the government cannot make this bill go down just by putting a little bit of pink sugar on it. The sugar is bright pink. Socialism does nothing else but offer people a short cut to avoid responsibility, with a great pie in the

sky when you die. All the farmer wants is a square deal here and now. He wants an opportunity to have some say in running his own affairs. I have found the farmers to be very capable, reasonable, strong, efficient and competitive people when they are given half a chance. It is very difficult to go to them and say: You grow it, we will sell it. Perhaps the minister will say: "I did not say that". I know who said that and I agreed with him at the time, because I still think that an aggressive sales policy and an aggressive international policy of world co-operation, through the world food bank, as well as the distribution of world wealth are probably better answers than any conclusions which we may reach today.

The point I am trying to make is that I think it is essential for a man's mental health to be master of his own destiny. I do not like to see a sugar-coated pill used to deprive him of something of inestimable value. It is like Esau selling his birthright for a mess of pottage. The farmer does not want this legislation that badly, even for the price of an acreage payment or a guaranteed price for hogs for two or three years. He sees this bill as selling down the river for his lifetime and the lifetime of his children, the right to be master of his own house. He is only asking for the right to run his own affairs, the same as does any other professional man today. A dentist is in control of his business, and so is a doctor. Educators are well banded together. Our unions are in almost complete control of the labour market. I am not asking for a closed shop in farming. I would say to the government, even at the best of times never guarantee them the whole market.

I want to see a fellow raising chickens for himself or raising calves for himself. He does not want to take orders from any benevolent government; he wants to get himself an acre of land, milk his own cow and mind his own business. I say that if farmers want government help and control in marketing, let us give them a minimum of government dictatorship with a maximum amount of co-operation. They have the right to ask for it because today farmers are no longer uneducated yokels. Today the farmer receives an education which in many cases is the equivalent of the education of any professional man. I happen to stand in a very privileged position because I have had to do those tasks on a farm which I know are difficult, and compared with which the conveying of land or the winning of a case in court is child's play.