pation by farmers and producers in the decision making by the agency, you could conceivably see much of Canada's farm production handled, administered and sold without any producer participation. The producer would be little more than the hired man of the agency that is to be set up, and I do not think this is what we want. Our thinking should be much more advanced than is evidenced by the provisions of this bill.

In this day and age one hears the phrase "industrial democracy". People connected with plants, factories and some of the academics in our universities are saying that the man who does the work should now be thinking in terms of participating in those decisions and operations that affect his daily life. This the farmer has done up till now, though as I said at the beginning of my address he has done it at a frightful price in terms of income. We know that farm income has lagged consistently below the national average in Canada, with the exception of the odd occasion. Indeed, a recent report issued by the Dominion Bureau of Statistics indicates that farm income in Saskatchewan dropped by 19.9 per cent, I think is the figure, between 1968 and 1969.

In order to correct this kind of situation and to give the farmers the bargaining power that they need, does the government have to take all of the decision making with regard to the marketing process and other matters away from the farmers? I think not. As I say, unless some protection is afforded the farmers in the bill, I am afraid in many areas they will merely be trying to conform to decisions that are made by civil servants, ministers, and perhaps managers in the processing industry who have power to make such decisions. The only thing that will assure the farmer a say in this kind of operation is the elective process. The farmer is one of the thousands at the bottom of the ladder; at the top you have the few. Only the elective process will assure him any real part in the decision making that takes place.

Supply management has been brought into this discussion, and this could very well be part of the government's objective in this legislation. Operation LIFT in western Canada is nothing more nor less than a supply management operation; indeed, it is declared to be such. Yet the farmer was given no vote or opportunity to make a decision in a matter that affects his daily life.

The stated objective of the bill is to establish an efficient and competitive farm products marketing board. This we must have, otherwise the needs of the people of Canada will not be served. But in addition to this stated objective, the bill should provide that part of the job of those who administer the act is to improve the income position of the farmer. This the board can do by bargaining for a better price for his product in the marketplace. The regulation of quality and markets is something that benefits the consumer. Any regulation that controls the product the farmer sends to the marketplace is not designed to protect his interest but to protect the interest of the consumer.

• (4:10 p.m.)

So, if this is to be a bargaining agency and if the objective is to bargain for a price for the farmer, then that objective should be stated in this bill. If it is not stated in this bill that the objective is to bargain for a price in order to achieve an acceptable income for the farmer, I would have very considerable difficulty in supporting the bill. What other objective is there in asking the farmer to submit to regulations under which an inspector, by virtue of a piece of paper someone gives him, could enter the farmer's premises any time and find out what the farmer has there, how long he has had it and what he intends to do with it. If a farmer should not choose to conform to these regulations, under certain circumstances he could land in jail. If a farmer is to submit to this kind of pressure, then there should be some benefit for the farmer. What the farmer is interested in is a fair price for his product.

We can use all the fancy words we know to say that we need economic, efficient and competitive farms. One could stand up at meetings and say all these things, but when one is all through the farmer would ask, "How much income will I have; what is the price of the product going to be and what will my balance sheet show at the end of the year?" That is what the farmer wants to know. This information is not contained in this bill. I suggest this is one of the important things which should be considered in respect of this bill. I refer to income maintenance. If the farmer, as this bill suggests, is to be an efficient and competitive individual, then we should also tell him how he is going to live. Any good economist will tell you, Mr. Speaker, that the term "perfect competition" is a term that is used. This is a situation when there is no control over price and when a product has to fight for its place in the