

Farm Products Marketing Agencies Bill

production may have on other producers in Canada. I suggest that perhaps this is the only economic sector where we say it is possible for anybody at any time to go into the business and do whatever he likes in it. There are not very many opportunities of that kind today.

Here we are faced with an industry that is affected by the vagaries of nature, sometimes great and sometimes poor. It is sensible that the people engaged in it take measures to market their products in an orderly way so they can dispose of surpluses in an orderly fashion when they have surpluses, and so they can store for lean years and build up production if demand is greater than the supply. These are sensible things which sensible people do. I do not shy away from them, and I do not shy away from recommending this bill to the people of Canada.

I am surprised when I hear opposition members saying this is not the kind of thing we should be doing. I heard the hon. member for Wetaskiwin (Mr. Moore) say what a shameful thing it is that growers, producers, might have to keep records, that there might be some kind of control on production and there might be some regulation of supply. I do not think that is a strange thing in this modern day and age: it is not at all surprising.

I wish to quote from the 1958 MacPhee report on the fruit industry of British Columbia. One of the recommendations in the report reads as follows:

That the provincial government request an amendment by the Governor in Council to the federal Order in Council under the Agricultural Products Marketing Act of Canada to give the Fruit Board powers similar to those given it by the Lieutenant Governor in Council in the province of British Columbia, and in addition the powers to pool and equalize returns on tree fruits sold in interprovincial and export trade.

We are beginning to get around to that with this bill. I have some other words here, this time from one of the producer organizations in the Okanagan Valley, with regard to this bill. This is what they say:

There are situations for certain commodities where co-operation between producer groups and different provinces is needed for the benefit of orderly marketing and can only be effective with national or regional agencies which must be provided for by federal legislation.

That is what the farmers of Canada are saying. I wonder if hon. members opposite who are opposing this bill listen to the farmers of Canada. I admit that this bill is not perfect. I share the concern of other hon. members as to how marketing agencies should

be controlled, but if hon. members opposite would read the bill they would see there would be a board which did the controlling.

It is intended that with respect to an individual marketing sector, be it hogs, dairying or whatever, the producers themselves can form a marketing board under the guidance of the government body set up under this bill—a board set up by the producers themselves with their representatives on it to organize and control marketing for the industry. If that is done I think we will solve the problem of control.

• (9:00 p.m.)

This is an extremely important point, not just from the standpoint of farmers having the say in the affairs of their industry; it is important in itself. It provides that vital link, contact between the producer and the marketplace, something which is lacking today in the sale of wheat and feed grains on the Prairies. In that case there is not enough contact between the farmer and the customer, and for that reason I do not agree with some of our marketing methods. The provisions of this bill are such that a link will be established. This is why I support this bill with great enthusiasm, Mr. Speaker. We should proceed with it as quickly as possible and develop it fully in the next few years so that it becomes an important link in our agricultural marketing program in Canada.

Hon. D. S. Harkness (Calgary Centre): Mr. Speaker, a few minutes ago when I stood up, before the previous speaker, the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Olson) whispered to me across the aisle, his surprise evident, "Are you going to speak on this bill?" I have not spoken on agricultural matters more than three or four times in the past ten years since I ceased to be Minister of Agriculture. However, this bill is so dangerous, Mr. Speaker, that I feel I have an obligation to point out the manifest dangers which I believe to be inherent in it—dangers to the agricultural industry and to Canadian society generally.

In my view, if this bill were passed and fully implemented we would have a completely state-controlled agricultural industry in this country, meaning the complete removal of freedom on the part of the farmer to decide how to manage his land in the best way, what to grow, and how to dispose of it. I do not think the farmers in this country want that.

[Mr. Howard (Okanagan Boundary).]