

Farm Products Marketing Agencies Bill

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel): Order. The Chair must point out to the hon. member for Lac-Saint-Jean that the mere fact of having proposed the motion has automatically made him lose his right to speak.

[*English*]

Mr. F. J. Bigg (Pembina): Mr. Speaker, it is a long time since Bill C-197 was introduced in this House. It is now back here in thinly disguised form as Bill C-176. We have heard tonight that it is by unanimous consent of the provinces and all farmers that this bill is before the House. However, many persons have been sending me mountains of letters telling me that if I allow the bill to pass, I am unfit to be a Member of Parliament—strange words from farmers of this country.

I am consistent in my attitude to farming. I consider myself a friend of farmers and I consider that Bill C-197 as introduced to this House by a western Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Olson) was unworthy of the House and unworthy of agriculture, western or any other type. It meant no less than the complete socialization of agriculture in this great democracy of ours. If it was so perfect, why did Liberal members, including the Minister of Agriculture, offer amendments to the bill when it was introduced in the House?

The hon. member for Bruce (Mr. Whicher), who provides noise rather than logic, stood in his place and said, "You are here to represent all of Canada". That is exactly what I am doing. The most recent word we had on this matter was from no less than the Supreme Court of Canada which has upheld the Constitution of Canada. I say that Bill C-176 does no less than try to take in through the back door what cannot be done through the front door. You cannot get unanimity from our Premiers for certain things in Canada, and this applies to agriculture as well.

I will talk out this bill unless it is altered to suit the people I represent. I have had orders in no uncertain terms from the people I represent, who say that if I allow Bill C-176 to pass in its present form they do not want to see me down here any more. I will oppose the bill unless it is amended considerably.

Since my time is short I will tell you that the very important amendment before the House at present purports to do exactly that which the Supreme Court of Canada has already said is in fact the law of Canada, that is, to make sure that we do not balkanize Canada. If we are to make the national marketing scheme work—and I believe in national marketing which represents the views of the producers of Canada—we must have the support not only of Members of Parliament and farm unions but also of farmers who raise cattle or chickens.

We must have a statesmanlike approach to the amendment before the House, which purports to do nothing more than enshrine in this act, in plain and simple language which everybody can understand, the concept that no agricultural products will be permitted free access to the markets of Canada through the back door which cannot be brought in through the front door. If the government wants to do this, let them do it in the proper

[Mr. Lessard (Lac-Saint-Jean).]

place. If they want to amend the BNA Act, let them do so in the proper place. They should not try to do it through Bill C-176.

The minister made promises to the western cattlemen. If he has unanimity in his own party, why do they not stand behind him? If the Liberal party trusts him to administer the bill, why do they not back up the amendments which he brought before the Standing Committee on Agriculture? I venture to say that wherever the parliamentary system works, a minister is obliged to resign when he does not have the support of his government members or of his own party.

To say that the official opposition is holding up the bill is nonsense. It is the Liberal party alone which refuses to make this bill palatable to the farmers of western Canada. Cheap and sly remarks to try to divide us and to win an election this fall by bringing in Bill C-176 at this late date, and then trying to hang it round the neck of the official opposition, is chicanery of the highest order. The people of my constituency sent me down here to try to make the marketing legislation work. When we put out a pamphlet, everybody could have had a copy. It stated four main points. One of them has already been incorporated in the bill.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel): It being ten o'clock, I must interrupt the proceedings.

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I wonder whether either the House or the House leaders of the various parties might make some arrangement whereby a bill, which I understand has a measure of approval of the House subject to remarks that hon. members may want to make—I speak of Bill C-243, the Judges Act—might obtain a hearing.

What the debate proves this evening is that there are many more farmers in this country than judges. This bill has as one of its prime purposes to supplement the provincial legislation from six provinces, calling for 26 new openings in the courts of appeal, the superior courts and the county courts of Ontario, Quebec, B.C., Alberta, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. These new openings cannot be filled until the House authorizes the payment of salaries and the appointment of judges. The provinces, through their Attorneys General and their legislatures, have felt that the business of the courts needs these extra appointments and that the administration of justice would be better served.

● (10:00 p.m.)

Mr. Bell: On the point of order, Mr. Speaker, this evening we indicated that we were in favour of moving the Judges Act along and passing it during this part of the session. However, we have had a pretty rough evening. In fact, many of us think it has been a wasted evening.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Bell: Although we know that tomorrow we will again be on the budget and we do not want to give up our rights, I suggest that the acting House leader contin-