

*Agricultural Policies*

committee for clause by clause study. In this case the official opposition is willing to cooperate with the government if the government is ready to be honest and fair with the agricultural industry with respect to the serious questions which have been raised.

Another basic principle, and I am thinking particularly of Bill C-197, is that there should be written into the legislation a right of appeal. There has been a misconception with regard to our demand for a producers' plebiscite. The demand is not that there should be a national plebiscite before the bill takes effect; producers in many areas have already had successful experience with provincial marketing boards. What is suggested, and I want to make this clear for the record, is that if an when this legislation becomes effective and a certain group of producers feel it is not acting in their interests, those producers should have the right to call a plebiscite within their industry and be permitted to withdraw in certain circumstances. I feel such a right should be granted under our democratic system in Canada. Here again is a matter of basic principle which should be agreed on before the bill goes to committee. Certain changes can, of course, be made during a clause by clause study but the basic principles of the bill may not be changed.

I could go on at greater length, Mr. Speaker, but I should like at this point to quote part of an article which appeared in the *Winnipeg Free Press* of June 2, 1970, with reference to Bill C-197. It says:

Agriculture seems destined to become one of the most controlled industries in Canada.

The days of the independent farmer making his own decisions and not checking with some bureaucrat, or reporting to some inspector to find out what he can grow and where and for how much, are numbered.

This trend emerges in the findings of the federal government's task force on agriculture. Main principles of its recommendations call for sharp reductions in surpluses and those surpluses brought under control. If necessary there is to be a drastic reduction in production.

The general public is now beginning to understand the reason for the stand taken by the official opposition with regard to these proposals. We are in favour of legislation which would add to the well-being of agriculture, but if we are to maintain a democratic form of government and if people are to live happily under a democratic system it is essential that all sectors of the economy should have a right to be heard. The traditional channel of the expression of their opinion is their elected representatives in the

House of Commons, where they can expect that their wishes and views will be translated into legislation likely to be of benefit to them. I trust the Minister of Agriculture and the Minister without Portfolio will take note of the principles involved in today's motion and will govern themselves accordingly.

**Mr. Bruce Howard (Okanagan Boundary):** Mr. Speaker, I want to say a word or two about the motion which is before the House today. I suppose we should not be too surprised at the things which are said about agriculture by members of the opposition. We regularly hear a forlorn tale from them on the subject, though there are very few positive suggestions made. I often hear sad stories from one of the hon. members who spoke in the debate today; he is a very wealthy farmer from Alberta who tells us about the troubles he is having.

I am not saying there are no problems in agriculture. As long as the rains come late or do not come at all, as long as the sun gets too hot sometimes, as long as the winter frost is more severe than it ought to be, or as long as there is intense competition in world markets there will always be problems in agriculture. What really matters is not so much the problems themselves as the way in which we approach them. I am surprised by this opposition motion. A rumour has been circulated by the New Democratic Party that it is the progressive party in Canada.

● (4:10 p.m.)

**An hon. Member:** That is just a rumour.

**Mr. Howard (Okanagan Boundary):** Yes, as one hon. member has said, it is just a rumour. It is a strange rumour. It seems to me that the only thing that is progressive about the New Democratic Party is that when the government suggests the minimum wage should be \$1.65, we can count on members of the New Democratic Party saying, "Let us make it \$1.70". That is how original and progressive they are.

If there should be a government bill that would have the effect of giving away \$50 million to somebody, the members of the New Democratic Party would say, "Let us make it \$75 million." That is the extent of their progressiveness in Canada. In fact, the New Democratic Party is, on the political spectrum of Canada, far to the right of the Conservative Party of Canada. So it is not surprising that the motion before us today is one that would have the effect of throwing the whole