

*Farm Products Marketing Agencies Bill*

unmanageable. I believe it is already quite clear that the problems of our urban communities are even more pressing than the economic problems of our rural communities. This government has not even started to think in terms of solving the problems in respect of the rapid urban growth. Indeed, the housing situation is in a state of confusion. We are told there are 18,000 people in the city of Toronto alone waiting for adequate public housing. We know that urban renewal has not entered into the government's program or planning at all. A Minister without Portfolio has been appointed to deal with this particular situation. As yet, however, no solutions have been forthcoming.

We know the situation concerning one leading minister of this government, the hon. member for Trinity (Mr. Hellyer), who with great, crusading zeal set out to solve one arm of our economic problem. He gave up in disgust because he could not get any action from the administration. I would think that rather than bring in this type of negative approach to the rural side of Canada's economic difficulty, the government would be much better advised to use the time at its disposal to deal with solutions concerning the other side of the coin, the urban situation which is in such a critical state that it will become much worse before there is any improvement.

In returning specifically to the principle of this bill, may I say that it is just a few years since we were concerned with the problem of the world food supply. Agriculture is the basic arm in the matter of food supply. We sent representatives abroad to participate in FAO conferences. This organization was the leader in respect of positive programs to establish food banks to feed the hungry of the world. We emphasized that the Canadian agricultural economy had all the production potential necessary to meet the growing demand for food in the world, so long as we could on a basis of international co-operation work out suitable marketing policies.

There was progress in this regard until this administration took over. I do not know why it has suddenly departed from this international outreach in assisting the world which is obviously short of food. We know that three-quarters of the people of the world are undernourished. Surely the real demand for food is not being met by any nation. One might ask why at this critical juncture in international affairs the government of Canada should retreat behind a negative supply management system with relation to

agricultural production. This is beyond my understanding and it is beyond the understanding of the farmers.

This is one theme the farmers repeat over and over when they discuss the critical problems they face. Why does the Minister of Agriculture, a westerner, not use his influence in emphasizing marketing and international co-operation, rather than restricting production which will inevitably lead to a further integration of our agricultural industry? I know the administration is committed to a continental policy. In its international relations, politically and militarily, it is withdrawing behind the continental frontier. It could be, of course, that the same philosophy in respect of agriculture is motivating its action in this regard.

Surely all members of the cabinet, particularly the Minister of Agriculture, do not subscribe to this sort of nineteenth century, narrow nationalism. Surely the minister could use his influence to persuade his colleagues who are continental isolationists to move out into the mainstream of twentieth century life and become tuned into the needs of the word as they exist. If the minister does not agree with the approach of the government, he has an alternative, as had the former minister responsible for housing. He could resign and express his protest over the present trends in government policy.

• (9:50 p.m.)

Those who defend Bill C-197 say that it is a response to the wishes of the farmers for a more orderly production and marketing system. I have been reading the comments that have already emanated from farm organizations such as the Canadian Federation of Agriculture and the National Farmers Union, and I find they do not express the sort of sympathy and general support for the legislation that the minister in his opening statement earlier in the month indicated was present.

The minister, speaking in Alberta on March 24 of this year, obviously ran into the same negative response with which he was confronted when in Brandon a week ago last Tuesday because of the failure of the government and the minister to consult the farm organizations. At that meeting, according to press reports, he promised that there would be consultation in detail. He also stated, as he as stated in the House, that the legislation is merely enabling legislation, it merely sets up