

*Agricultural Products Act*

or processing of agricultural products and at such times as the minister may designate in such order;

(d) enter into contracts for the storing or processing of agricultural products.

**Mr. Gardiner:** May I suggest, and I think the leader of the opposition will agree, that that does confine the method of marketing that might be followed under this act.

**Mr. Drew:** It does not confine any method of marketing.

**Mr. Gardiner:** Yes; it has to be by agreement with governments.

**Mr. Rowe:** You control everything.

**Mr. Drew:** I cannot imagine anything that indicates more clearly how little the government appreciates exactly what it is asking this House of Commons to do. The comment just made by the Minister of Agriculture indicates how little he appreciates it, because the section I have just read is a wide open provision for state marketing with every other nation in the world, if the government so desires, and under any terms it sets forth. It does not set out the terms of marketing. It does not define how it will be done. It says that it may be done with any nation.

**Mr. Gardiner:** Provided there is an agreement with that nation.

**Mr. Drew:** Yes.

**Mr. Gardiner:** In other words, there has to be a contract similar to the contracts now in effect for bacon, cheese and eggs.

**Mr. Drew:** No; that is exactly what it does not say. It does not say that there must be a contract similar to the contract the government has for bacon, cheese and eggs. It is the very opposite of that. It can be a contract of any kind that the government deems advisable at any time. There may be different contracts for every government, and there may be different prices—or with the same government for different types of commodities. There is no definition of the contract, and that is exactly the point I am making now.

This is not a method of marketing; it is a simple declaration that the government can negotiate in any way it sees fit, and at any time, with any nation, or with any agency of any nation. It means that a government which has different agencies dealing with different commodities can make different terms under different conditions with this government for the purchase of any kind of food, except wheat—because this act does not cover wheat.

A very interesting provision of the act to which not too much attention has been paid is found in paragraph (b) of section 3, which declares that the government of Canada may

[Mr. Drew.]

act for any foreign government or the agency of any foreign government to purchase or acquire foodstuffs of any kind in Canada, except wheat. That is in paragraph (b). Such contracts may be contracts of any kind approved by the government. It is not enough to say that such contracts have never been made. This is what the act says this government can do. In other words, the government can become a publicly-owned purchasing agent for any other government, and under any terms the government may seek to establish from time to time, without consulting agricultural experts in this country.

**Mr. Rowe:** Regular hucksters.

**Mr. Drew:** The remarks I am making in no way relate to the knowledge or good faith of the Minister of Agriculture, or to his desire to market the foodstuffs of this country. My remarks relate once more to the question whether this House of Commons should proceed to declare a national emergency without any evidence of that emergency having been presented to the house, and in doing so to declare an emergency under which this government would have power to introduce any other act of a similar nature.

If members of the house vote for a measure of this kind and declare a general emergency—and there can be no suggestion of this being a general emergency, because the Minister of Agriculture himself made it clear in the comment he has just made—then I say members of the house would have no right in common sense, whether they did it on any other ground, to refuse a separate bill brought forward by the government dealing with any other subject which would also relate to a national emergency. If on this occasion they think there is a general emergency in relation to food, and say we should continue this measure, then this house should not refuse to make the same declaration at some later date if this government sought to suspend the constitution in regard to any particular subject which is now dealt with exclusively by the provincial governments.

On earlier occasions when this same bill was before the house amendments were introduced by this party calling for the introduction of an agricultural products marketing act which would deal with these matters through democratic provincial marketing boards. Had such an act been introduced, a similar amendment would have been moved on this occasion, but such an amendment cannot be introduced now for the simple reason that there has been before the house for some time a bill entitled the Agricultural Products Marketing Act. It relates to pro-