

*Farm Products Marketing Agencies Bill*

documents of farmers. Any farmer who does not comply with a marketing agency order will be liable for up to two years in prison.

We know what happened recently with the LIFT program. The government used the big club and told farmers not to plant, that if they did plant the club would come down and they would have no quota. Using that as an analogy, I am sure that this is why some people are concerned at the provisions of Bill C-197 now before the House. Equally, I am sure it is why most members of the House will support the amendment of the hon. member for Crowfoot. If the amendment were accepted, there would be broad representation provisions in a new bill. This is our concern at the present time and I am sure it is the concern of many people in this nation.

The article goes on:

It also provides for the licensing of farmers to grow or produce the regulated agricultural commodity or market it in interprovincial or export trade.

Other bills similar to Bill C-197 have not included regulations. Hon. members of the House know how long it took the regulations published pursuant to the LIFT program to become public knowledge. How many questions were asked by members of this House about when the regulations would become public knowledge, so that the individual producers would know what to do? It took many weeks before any such knowledge was made available to members of the House and agricultural producers across the country. This is why I am always suspicious of any bill before the House that provides for regulations to be made pursuant thereto but the regulations are not part of the bill. This suspicion is reinforced when the minister does not stand in his place and tell the House what the regulations are.

I cannot understand the argument that Parliament must approve the mechanism of this bill before the regulations can be brought in. The agricultural producers of the nation will continue to be concerned about the bill until these regulations are brought forward. To date I have heard very little from the minister about the regulations pertaining to the National Farm Products Marketing Council. Before this debate is ended I ask the minister to stand up and give the House an indication of what these regulations will be. I think members of the House on both sides would do a disservice to the nation if they passed the bill without knowing what the regulations will involve. There is little point in our being

[Mr. Skoberg.]

here if we have to go back to our constituents and tell them we voted for the bill in ignorance of the regulations. This is a meaningless procedure both to us and to the people we represent, particularly those who are engaged in the marketing of agricultural produce of the sort referred to in the bill.

I should like to make another brief reference to an article in the *Globe and Mail* of March 12, headed: "Farm groups' enthusiasm wanes for national marketing program". This article spells out why the farm groups' enthusiasm has waned as far as the national marketing program is concerned. One of the main causes of disenchantment with previous agricultural programs introduced by the government has been the lack of regulations telling the farmers affected what the program is all about. I am sure every hon. member in this House is well aware of the letters they have received from individual producers and agricultural groups who do not know what is in store for them in the future. The bill before the House does not tell the agricultural producers what is in store for their future. Neither does it tell them what the regulations will involve, nor say whether the people engaged in the production of farm produce will be represented. That is, it does not tell them these things unless this amendment is passed.

If the minister would stand in his place and announce that he will permit representation on the National Farm Products Marketing Council from the groups to which I have referred, then the members of this party will have no hesitation in supporting the government and passing the bill, even though we do not know what the regulations will involve. Somewhere along the line the minister must accept responsibility and permit representation by other than Order in Council in the matter of appointments to the marketing council. In the short time that I have been here I have found that although people who serve on boards and commissions sometimes have the highest qualifications, at no time has the majority of these people had any practical knowledge. Those appointed to the marketing council should have some practical knowledge of the marketing of agricultural produce, and this cannot be learned from a textbook. This is true whether the product concerned is grain or livestock.

I realize the Minister of Agriculture is well educated in the subject of livestock, but I am not sure how well educated he is in other areas, having taken a look at some of the provisions in this bill. I am sure that in the