

Farm Products Marketing Agencies Bill

job. I think the point that needs to be kept in mind is that the basic inadequacies have been in the area of government policy.

In my view, the latest example of that has to do with the question of operation LIFT. I hope that no government attempts to introduce marketing policies or to make use of the legislation now before us in the way the government has used the Canadian Wheat Board Act in introducing operation LIFT. The farmers have a rather colloquial and very down-to-earth term in referring to operation LIFT. If I were to use the term in this House, I would possibly be ruled out of order. Perhaps I could refer to it in the way farmers use the term. They describe operation LIFT as being a half donkey type of plan. I think this contention on the part of many farmers is borne out when we take into account the comments made in answer to a Motion for Papers which I placed on the Order Paper some time after the announcement of the Minister without Portfolio (Mr. Lang). On March 25 a Motion for Papers in my name was moved asking—

That an order of the House do issue for a copy of all background studies and reports prepared for the government in connection with the Lower Inventory for Tomorrow and Wheat Acreage Reduction Programs.

What was the response of the government? When the motion was moved in the House of Commons the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence who on that day was dealing with Motions for Papers in the House, answered as follows:

Mr. Speaker, I am informed by the hon. Otto E. Lang, Minister without Portfolio, that there are no background studies or reports prepared for the government as requested by the hon. member. Background material on this subject has been prepared by government officials. However, such material constitutes internal government documents and is therefore privileged. As there is no material suitable for tabling, the minister would ask the hon. member to withdraw his motion.

I think that certainly indicates the lack of adequate study and planning in presenting operation LIFT to the people of this country. I also suggest, Mr. Speaker, that if the government is to carry on any sort of meaningful consultations with the farmers of this country in dealing with marketing problems in future, it will have to use a different approach than was used in connection with operation LIFT. I suggest to the Minister of Agriculture, who is in his seat, and to the Minister without Port-

folio in charge of the Canadian Wheat Board, who is also in his seat, that when consultations took place with the farm organizations on operation LIFT before it was announced, the plan that was discussed with the farm organizations was different from the plan finally announced. If that is not true, I challenge either of those ministers to rise in his place and say so.

I suggest that this illustrates the bankruptcy of government policy in dealing with the entire area of agricultural and farm marketing. I suggest that operation LIFT and the way it has been introduced is a distortion and perversion of the entire principle of orderly marketing.

An hon. Member: You said it!

Mr. Burton: If this is any indication of what the government will do with marketing legislation in the future, there is grave cause for doubt in dealing with the legislation now before us. I have some further remarks to make, but I do not have time to finish them this evening. Before calling it ten o'clock, may I have your indulgence, Mr. Speaker, to note that the hon. member for Selkirk (Mr. Rowland), who is in his seat at the moment, has also taken a great deal of interest in this legislation. This is the first opportunity I have had in the House to congratulate him on his election to the House.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Burton: Mr. Speaker, may I also have your indulgence to note a unique role that the hon. member for Selkirk has undertaken in becoming a member of this chamber. In 1968 there were elected to the House of Commons 96 members who had never before sat in this chamber. One of those members fell by the wayside when his election was declared null and void. In the two by-elections, prior to the one at Selkirk, held since 1968 we witnessed the return of hon. members who had previously sat in this House. Thus, the 95 of us were still junior members of the House of Commons. Now we have a new member of the House and the 95 of us can now consider that we are no longer the junior members of the House of Commons. The hon. member for Selkirk is now the junior member. Certainly he does not need to look askance at this new role because I suggest he can consider that he has taken the place formerly occupied by 95 members. May I call it ten o'clock, Mr. Speaker?