

Farm Products Marketing Agencies Bill

so that we may study it in depth and point out its benefits. I think most of its components are very good, but I also recognize that there are some loopholes in it and that, in a few places, there is room for improvement. The proper body for that study would be the Committee on Agriculture. Even though I might add a few things tonight, I shall sit down, for I intend to come back on this later on.

[English]

Hon. W. G. Dinsdale (Brandon-Souris): Mr. Speaker, at this stage, as you have rightfully pointed out to the members of the House, we are discussing merely the principle of Bill C-197. I want at the outset of my remarks to indicate that this is the point on which I mean to dwell this evening, and to state quite emphatically that I disagree fundamentally with the purposes of the bill that is sponsored by the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Olson).

I think, unfortunately and tragically, that the bill is moving in the general direction of dealing with the many economic problems that confront Canada at the present time by depending on government action as the final solution and arbiter. Every time a problem, particularly an economic problem, presents itself in this country, automatically the government's response is to have more and more arbitrary power and control in the hands of the government, and perhaps what is even worse than this, more and more arbitrary control in delegating power to a growing public administration in Canada.

It is not necessary for me to enumerate some of the recent trends, but we had the notorious example of Rule 75C which was before the House less than one year ago, under which the government, in its desire to streamline parliamentary debate and to deal with what it regarded as a major difficulty in the Canadian body politic, the expeditious handling of public issues, gave unto itself by legislative decree—in this particular instance, by the use of closure—absolute control over the debating time in this House of Commons.

I oppose Bill C-197 because it follows precisely this trend that has become the pattern of the government's approach to all problems facing Canadians at the present time. I suggest this approach is moving in the opposite direction to that required for the solution of our extremely difficult agricultural problems.

My hon. friend the Minister of Agriculture was in my constituency about two weeks ago and met a group of concerned citizens and farmers in the city of Brandon. I think he

[Mr. Corbin.]

will agree with me that he did not get a very positive response to some of the solutions that he, as minister in the government responsible for dealing with agricultural problems today, is proposing as long-term solutions. I know that this particular bill was not directly under consideration that evening; the farmers were most concerned with the topical subject of LIFT, the "Lower Inventory For Tomorrow" program which they have nicknamed the "Lower Income For Tomorrow" program. The farmers oppose LIFT for precisely the same reasons as they will oppose this piece of government legislative initiative to set up a National Farm Products Marketing Council as it becomes understood and filters down to the grass roots of the farm economy.

● (9:40 p.m.)

The government has failed to deal with the fundamental problem in respect of agriculture. This is a marketing and sales problem rather than a supply management problem. I do not know why the Minister of Agriculture, who is a westerner and a farmer, has embraced this dogma. It has become such a well established pattern that I think we can refer to it only as a dogma or an automatic conditioned response whereby the solution to any problem on the agricultural front is to cut down on the supply. That is what the LIFT program is all about and it is what this measure is all about.

Instead of bringing forward this and other measures, the minister should take a more positive position and deal with the question of marketing the farm commodity. I am sure it is fair criticism to say that the government has decided that the number of farmers employed in the agricultural industry must be reduced by government action. The government says that the farm economy can no longer sustain the number of producers in the industry, and therefore is deliberately by its policy initiatives aggravating rather than solving the problem of the rural-urban drift which has been going on apace in the North American continent, if not in the world, during the past two or three decades.

By its policy the government is merely shifting the major problem from one sector of the economy to another, because the only possible alternative employment for farmers who have been displaced due to the decline of the agricultural industries is in the big, booming, buzzing urban communities which already have reached such a size that in many respects they have become quite