

Farm Products Marketing Agencies Bill

experience with these gentlemen who inhabit the desert of the treasury benches. We know how inflexible they are. We know that no matter how bad the cause they espouse—and that is a phrase which applies to many of their legislative proposals—they will never listen to, never seek and never admit any legitimate amendments. It was for this reason that we offered the amendment proposed by the hon. member for Crowfoot.

I have no illusions about the bill, but because of what has been said by Your Honour I do not want to give my own views on the bill as they would be considered highly unparliamentary. I prefer to concur in the remarks of the very highest quality of statesmanship made by the hon. member for Swift Current-Maple Creek (Mr. McIntosh) which express, in sound and solid sentiments, the views which a great many people, which most of the farming community and which all members of this party have and with which, I am very sorry to hear, members of the NDP do not agree.

Something has been said about how long this debate has already taken. When bad legislation comes before the House—and if there was ever bad legislation, Mr. Speaker, this is it—we consider we have not only a right but a duty to discuss the issues and the bill to such an extent that the people of the country, and in particular those who are most affected—in this case the agricultural community—are aware of the defects, the pitfalls and the evils of the legislation. I think we are being successful in this objective. There are now a great many people who, having heard the arguments advanced from this side of the House, are convinced the legislation is not what is suggested by the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Olson). So we have no apologies at all to make for having taken this debate through this period of solid, sensible discussion, at least on this side of the House, so that we and the people of the country know that this bill is not what the Minister of Agriculture says it is.

Just today the Minister of Agriculture tabled the report titled "Canadian Agriculture in the Seventies". I have not had time to read it all—

Mr. Olson: Read page 328.

Mr. Baldwin:—but just glancing through—it I came upon two quotations which I think would be edifying to this House. They are in chapter 11 which deals with the whole issue [Mr. Baldwin.]

of government in agriculture and agribusiness. On page 273 I read:

Canadian farm policy since 1930—has been largely one of providing expedient measures to meet crises of depression, drought, war inflation and surpluses—There is little evidence that Canada has had any over-all national policy based on clear thinking and economic and sociological research facts.

But, more important, on page 300 I read:

The primary and continuing role of governments should be to produce a desirable economic and social climate for farmers and agribusiness.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Baldwin: I am amazed to see the Minister of Agriculture applaud that. If he applauds that statement, why didn't he put it into effect in this Bill?

Mr. Olson: Why don't you read a little of the recommendations on page 328?

Mr. Baldwin: We on this side of the House do not engage in selective reading, Mr. Speaker.

Economically, governments should promote the efficient use of resources through their support for research, extension, education, marketing services and from time to time, through legislation of funds to increase or stabilize prices and incomes. This role does not include "managing" agriculture any more than it is the role of governments to "manage" the steel industry or the pulp and paper industry.

And, I might even say, to manage the House of Commons, as the right hon. Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) so dearly loves to do.

Because the firms in farming are smaller than in other sectors, the kinds of government services required to create a desirable climate for them will be different from those of other sectors.

That is the primary recommendation. The role of the government must not include that of managing agriculture. Mr. Speaker, if there was ever a bill before this House which attempted to manage a business, and particularly the business of agriculture, you will see it within the four corners of Bill C-197.

Mr. Olson: Read the recommendations on page 328.

Mr. Baldwin: Talk about selective quotations! Last Thursday the minister cited one small, miserable section of the Ontario Farm Produce Marketing Act. That was highly selective indeed. He attempted to persuade the House that there was a parallel between the provisions of this bill and the provisions of the Ontario legislation dealing with the marketing of farm produce. Nothing could be