

Farm Products Marketing Agencies Bill

we believe that instead of introducing bills to establish new agencies, in order to ensure the marketing of products and their exchange from one province to the other, the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Olson) and his Parliamentary Secretary (Mr. Côté) should consider what is happening in this country.

In 1962, 1963, 1964 and 1965, the present Minister of Agriculture, then the Creditiste member for Medicine Hat, used to say practically the same thing I am saying now and was able to prove without too much difficulty, because he was right, that the Canadian problem was not one of agricultural or industrial production, but a problem of distribution. And we are still facing the same problem today.

Why are quotas necessary? Why are western farmers told to stop producing wheat? Why are eastern farmers told: if your dairy production exceeds a certain quota you will be penalized? Why? Because we have a surplus of products which everyone cannot afford to buy, because the member for Richelieu is well aware that there are mothers in the province of Quebec at the present time with families of 8 or 10 children who would need five, six or seven quarts of milk daily, but who cannot even afford to buy one. It is not a problem of overproduction that faces us, but a problem of underconsumption. That is still beyond the government's understanding, as evidenced by Bill C-197.

The minister is aware of all this. At one time he advocated a monetary reform with a view to making money available to consumers and disposing of production. He was the one to ask for a two-price system for wheat so that the western farmers would get rid of their grain. Today he does not mention such things any more.

[English]

Mr. Asselin: Why did you change your mind?

Mr. Olson: We have it now.

Mr. Caouette: What does the minister say?

Mr. Olson: We have it now.

Mr. Caouette: Yes—no price and one price, that is your two-price system. First none at all, and then a little wee bit as a price not to produce wheat. Did the minister ever advocate such a thing while he was sitting on this side of the House as a Social Crediter?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. That may be difficult—

[Translation]

—the Minister is asking permission to put a question to the hon. member who has the floor.

[English]

Mr. Olson: I simply wanted to ask the hon. member, has he been made aware of the floor price that has been put on Canadian wheat for domestic consumption, which constitutes a partial two-price system?

Mr. Caouette: Yes, but the supplement to it is the worst part of it. The minister knows this. When he was sitting on this side of the House as a Social Crediter when did he advocate a policy that the western farmers be paid not to produce wheat? He never did. When did he say that as a Social Crediter?

An hon. Member: Talk your way out of that.

Mr. Olson: He does not answer the question.

[Translation]

Mr. Caouette: Mr. Speaker, we are fed up with the government making game of the farmers. My colleague from Portneuf (Mr. Godin) was right when he said last night that this is a new gimmick to appoint more bureaucrats.

A moment ago, the member for Joliette (Mr. La Salle) said that he travelled throughout Canada with the Standing Committee on Agriculture in order to see for themselves the plight of the farmers. They have seen it, but they have been travelling across the country for the same purpose for the past six or seven years. And when the farmers dare complain, dare make representations to the government, the hon. members, especially government members, take pleasure in sitting back contentedly.

Recently, farmers demonstrated in Sherbrooke in the Eastern Townships. Yesterday or the day before, there was a demonstration at Saint-Jean-Port-Joli, in Kamouraska county. Was the Minister's Parliamentary Secretary there? Indeed not.

When farmers brought in a petition signed by 25,000 people, including the parliamentary secretary himself, did the latter have the courage to submit that petition to the house? He did not, because his party said no. Whom then does the hon. member represent here? The party or the people of his Richelieu constituency? The party or the farmers of the