

Farm Products Marketing Agencies Bill

Mr. Skoberg: And as I looked across and saw the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) in his place for a few short moments, it reminded me of the tokenism which is so evident in this bill. In my opinion, Mr. Speaker, this bill is straight tokenism and means very little to the agricultural producers.

I also understand that the Prime Minister pretty well took the whip to his people, and as we look across the chamber tonight we note that this is probably the only reason that many of the hon. members on that side are here tonight. It is a clear indication that unless the Prime Minister himself is present he cannot rely on too many of his members to be in their places to defend the policy which the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Olson) has brought forward. It is also clear that the minister himself is not all that confident in so far as this legislation is concerned.

I am particularly interested to note that the Minister of Labour (Mr. Mackasey) is with us at this time, at 4.15 in the morning.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Skoberg: I am very confident that the amendment introduced by my colleague from Timiskaming (Mr. Peters), with regard to the type of bargaining which should go on with respect to products, is something with which the Minister of Labour should be fully familiar. It seems to me he knows a little about industrial democracy, he knows a considerable amount about collective bargaining and he knows well that individuals who are affected by any type of legislation, collective agreement or any managerial prerogative should have the opportunity to express themselves as to the type of changes which may come about or which may, in the future, be either to the detriment or benefit of that particular class.

I am equally confident that if the Minister of Labour were to have his way he would be only too pleased to stand in his place and support the amendment which is now before the House, because it is really collective bargaining. I can well understand some of the people opposite who ask, "Who will be the collective bargaining agent representing the producer?" This is obviously a situation in which they are trying to cloud the issue, because that is something that would be resolved by the producers. They themselves would determine who that collective bargaining agent would be. Surely, when we do come to a vote on the amendment and ask the committee to take another look at this clause, the Minister of Labour will want to support the principle of collective bargaining. Surely before then the Minister of Labour would like to rise in his place and defend the principle of collective bargaining. Actually, this is all the amendment means. If the minister were really concerned about the kind of representation and changes being made to the betterment of the producer, this amendment would be accepted.

The main factor to consider in this bill is whether it provides for proper marketing or for the manipulation of production. The crux of the matter is whether the large corporations are going to manipulate production in this country. Members on all sides of the House are really concerned about the small producer. When I look at the token amendments that have been offered, I wonder whether the producer will really be protected from

manipulation. This is one area we should be greatly concerned about.

This bill does not offer anything. It gives an illusion. That illusion is anyone's guess. We will be creating a false impression for the people of Canada if we say that the debate being carried on at this time of the morning will result in any betterment for the producer. The Canadian farmers have been sold out by the Minister of Agriculture and his colleagues by this bill. There is nothing in it that can be of any benefit to them. The real issue at stake revolves around the provision that there be something in the bill to give the farmer and the producer some bargaining power. The amendment moved by my colleague would do something along this line.

I was amazed when the hon. member for Bruce (Mr. Whicher) said that the National Farmers Union was in complete agreement with this bill. I understand a news release has been issued by the president of the National Farmers Union in Saskatoon which spells out that they are not in agreement with it. I suggest that the hon. member for Bruce look at the press headlines tomorrow. He will then see whether the National Farmers Union has agreed to this bill.

We are trying to do something that will be agreeable to all producers in this country. The hon. member for Crowfoot suggested that he had received what he wanted. I believe the Minister of Agriculture would like to have seen the bill pass in its original form. In that particular text it would have included all commodities in the agricultural field.

When this bill comes to a vote we will realize that we must include some form of bargaining for the producers. My colleague stated this evening that every chicken, pig and cow has a vote. If the ball is tossed to the smaller producers, it will not be in existence very long. It will be a sorry day when everyone in Canada realizes that, after the other place looks at it, we have passed a "nothing" piece of legislation. The people expected more, after two years of debate and all the horse-trading. They expected something that would include all commodities, not to end up with the situation we now have.

• (4:20 a.m.)

Surely the Minister of Labour would like to stand up and tell us about his experience with management over the years he has been Minister of Labour, and about his experience in the field of proper representation for people who are affected by adverse legislation. Surely he would like to explain to the House how he believes in industrial democracy, and how he would in this particular case plead that the producers have a real say in the bargaining process. It is only by the adoption of the amendment and referred back to the committee that the hon. member for Timiskaming has suggested in his motion that this can come about.

Mr. S. J. Korchinski (Mackenzie): Mr. Speaker, I realize you are very cosy in your chair and I would very much like to be in similar circumstances. However, the former speaker simply begged someone to make a few comments in reply to those he uttered. He mentioned that it is the official opposition which has straddled the fence. Let me tell my friend from Moose Jaw (Mr. Skoberg) that if