

*Cold Storage Act*

The effect of the change in the act was practically to suspend its operation, because during the four years that it operated in its amended form no subsidies were paid because no municipal cold storage plants were organized nor were any moneys earned under subsidy. During that period the government that preceded us undertook the construction of one of the best cold storage plants, if not the best, in Canada, at the port of Montreal. I had the pleasure of visiting this institution and in my opinion it is one of the finest not only in Canada but on this continent. I do not know whether that government's policy was to converge on that plant to the exclusion of others, but the policy, if that was the object, was a sound one. Be that as it may, the plant is a credit to Canada. But that period has gone by. The present act is not operating and we are voting sums of money from year to year which we are unable to spend because apparently no municipality is desirous of taking advantage of the grant to build municipal cold storages. The proposal therefore is to amend the terms of the act so that it shall apply to co-operative institutions.

When the resolution was before the committee there were two criticisms offered, which I think had a useful object. The first was the fact that the bill did not provide for any proper regulation of these cold storage plants after the instalments had all been paid. It had been my intention to provide for this in one of two or three ways, preferably at that time by way of regulation. It is very difficult to get a bill sufficiently flexible to apply to all the meritorious institutions when you incorporate such a regulation in it. But you can have regulations sufficiently flexible to suit the conditions and the times as necessary. However, I am not committed to that method. If the committee to which I purpose referring the bill, that is, the Committee on Agriculture, has any method of regulation, without making it too rigid, for incorporation in the bill I shall be pleased to consider it favourably.

Another suggestion was that there should be a more specific description of what constitutes co-operative associations. Now, the bill was left open on that point purposely. We may differ as to what constitutes a co-operative association. Sometimes semi-philanthropic joint stock companies may be real and valid co-operative organizations. On the other hand, a great many people hold the view that no institution is strictly co-operative unless its profits are at least partially distributed on the basis of business supplied by each patron. It occurred to myself and my staff, and to those who had the charge of drafting this short bill, that it would be better

[Mr. Motherwell.]

to leave the point open as to just what constituted a co-operative society, because it might be considered that a joint stock company that had as part of its objective profit making, when it was in fact semi-beneficent in its character, had just as much right to be recognized for a subsidy under the act as if it were a full-fledged co-operative organization with at least part of its profits distributed on a business contributing basis as regards its patrons. However, if any change can be suggested without being too rigid and confining the application of the bill to too small an area, I shall be pleased to consider such a suggestion. As a matter of fact, all we desire is to get the bill functioning. We are not satisfied with merely voting \$50,000 a year in the estimates without having the money spent in providing proper cold storage facilities, and the primary object of the bill is to afford such facilities. I do not know that I have anything further to add, Mr. Speaker, and I would now formally move the second reading of the bill so that I may refer it to the Committee on Agriculture.

Mr. MACLEAN (Halifax): The minister stated that under the act three plants had been subsidized in Nova Scotia. Are they still in existence and what are the names of the companies? Further, can the minister tell us whether the Montreal cold storage plant was a municipal institution?

Mr. MOTHERWELL: No, national.

Mr. MACLEAN (Halifax): Constructed by the Montreal harbour board?

Mr. MOTHERWELL: Yes.

Mr. MACLEAN (Halifax): Did it receive a subsidy under the act?

Mr. MOTHERWELL: No.

Mr. MACLEAN (Halifax): Then it has nothing to do with the act?

Mr. MOTHERWELL: No, I mentioned it incidentally. As I understood it, the object of the government in practically suspending the operation of the act was to concentrate activities on the Montreal institution. As regards the Nova Scotia plants, I understand they are all in operation. The Lockport cold storage plant receives a subsidy of \$17,055, the Halifax Cold Storage Company, at Port Hawkesbury, \$9,115, and the Leonard Fisheries, Limited, \$60,000. I might add that the largest grant earned under the old subsidy act was \$105,000 by a cold storage plant at Prince Rupert. The Canadian Fish and Cold Storage Plant, which the hon. member for