

*Egg and Hog Grading*

around town and wants to go home. He gets his grade before he goes, so it is quite practical there and I think it is a good policy to aim at here; it is the correct policy wherever the country lends itself to it. I am glad to see that the department has adopted that policy, and probably it will be extended as time goes on, as that was the original intention.

The question of the grading of eggs always has been a knotty problem in this house. Eggs are amongst the most difficult farm products to grade, because the quality will not stay put very long. If eggs are exposed to high temperatures, for instance, of course the quality will depreciate, and the original grader has to allow for a little deterioration which must take place in the time which elapses before the eggs reach the ultimate consumer. The new regulations which were put into force last November, I think, have simplified the grades and made them more understandable to the purchasing public. I think that is an improvement, and it is what we expect. All legislation, all regulation and all progress is based upon the experiences of the past and there is no system of doing anything that is not capable of improvement as time warrants it. I can assure the hon. member for Brome-Missisquoi that I shall be delighted to do anything I can to improve the grading of hogs, eggs or any other commodity. I notice on the order paper a fruit act which carries out the same principle, and while this looks pretty drastic on the surface I think it is all right.

I wish to assure the minister—and this is chiefly what I rose to say—that I am only too glad to be able to lend my support at this time. When I took charge of the Department of Agriculture my predecessor often gave me the benefit of his experience and his support at times when I needed it, and similarly I hope to be helpful to my hon. friend because I know what it is to have to stand up not only against one's own colleagues but also against the great body of members coming from rural districts who become irritated with every little restraint that is put on them and that they do not understand. They come back to the minister and say, "Why do you want to be worrying about these things? Let matters stand as they are. This is pure theory, it is claimed, and merely irritates the worried and already overburdened producer." But I find that if we persist in these matters and be frank with the producer, eventually the principle is accepted; then the details are improved upon and finally the whole country wonders why the plan of

[Mr. Motherwell.]

grading was not adopted long before. Just at this time, when we are looking to the British market, we should go forward and not backward, on quality, quantity and continuity, and that is why I rose to extend to the minister my support in his endeavour to improve matters in this respect.

Mr. W. J. LOUCKS (Rosetown): I do not propose to take up very much of the time of the house, Mr. Speaker, and I am sure I would be the last to oppose either the hog grading or the egg grading act. As the ex-Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Motherwell) has already intimated, however, there is a feeling throughout the country that justice is not being meted out, particularly in connection with egg grading, and I think there is room for improvement, because at the present time the producers are pretty well at the mercy of the retailers with regard to the grade of their eggs. If something could be done to improve that condition I think it would be appreciated throughout the country. The ex-Minister of Agriculture also said that this is one of the most difficult problems with which we have to contend, and I quite agree with that statement. As the hon. gentleman said, the fact that they do not stay put very long with regard to quality increases the difficulty of properly grading them.

It was a pleasure to me to see the agreement to-day between the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Weir) and the ex-Minister of Agriculture in connection with the grading of hogs and eggs, and I think this would be an opportune time to place this matter before the agriculture committee. I always feel that nothing is so good that it cannot be improved and perhaps, if we send these acts to the agriculture committee for further discussion, we may find that there is room for improvement here as well. If we cannot improve them, well and good, but if we can improve them I am sure it will be appreciated throughout the dominion.

Mr. GROTE STIRLING (Yale): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Brome-Missisquoi (Mr. Pickel) is to be congratulated for having brought this matter to the attention of the house. I think enough has been said during the course of the debate to show that there is some misunderstanding with regard to grading and that there is a difference of opinion as to what is done and how it is done. I think it very desirable that the question should be further ventilated, and the right way to do that is to send it to the agriculture committee. I therefore beg to move: