

*Supply—Egg Grading*

worth much to the producer, but here is one act on the part of the government that is really to the advantage of the producer of eggs, and here these middlemen have to step in and try to muddle up the thing and not have the system accepted.

I felt like pluming myself when I heard that, because I was partially responsible for the act. I am not wholly responsible, because my predecessors were responsible for introducing the act first as applied to the wholesale and interprovincial trade. It was not until 1923 that it was extended to the retail trade.

Mr. GUTHRIE: Hear, hear.

Mr. MOTHERWELL: We will come to that. Of course we all have to recognize that my hon. friend (Mr. Guthrie) is a profound authority on these markets. There are some other matters he may know more about, but we admit that on this particular subject he is quite an authority. We have also to admit that his statement has been rational and reasonable to the extent of his knowledge of the question under discussion.

I was sorry to have had a misunderstanding with the hon. member for North Waterloo (Mr. Euler). I think nobody would quarrel with the hon. member unless such person were suffering from a delusion. However, we had a little misunderstanding. I never dreamt that he was asking me with respect to the grading of eggs on the local market. I told him that under section 10 of the regulations, the farmers were exempt from grading eggs that were put on the market in the usual way and were not retailed. I also indicated that if a farmer had a number of customers, and there are a great many such, in the cities and towns, and delivered eggs to them, no grading was required there. The hon. member for North Waterloo may say that the farmers are required to grade their eggs when they go on to the market and become retailers. We do not use the word "retailers," but that is what the farmers become when they go on the market and retail their own eggs. That is what my hon. friend was alluding to, I suppose, in his remarks to me—the case of the farmer who sells eggs by retail, in other words the farmer who is a producer in the first instance and a retailer in the second instance. If what is asked can be permitted without upsetting the whole apple-cart I will be glad to consider it. But the conditions under which eggs are sold not on the market but on the market-place—I think that is what my hon. friend for South Wellington had in mind—should be remembered. Go down to the market-place in Ottawa and you will find others than farmers there selling

[Mr Motherwell.]

eggs. You will find hucksters and peddlers, and dear only knows where these men get their eggs. They do not produce eggs—they are rarely egg producers but they get them in any old place where they can gather them up. There are really several classes of people that dispose of eggs on the local market-place. Now the request is made that we make an exception of farmers. I am willing to consider the request but it must be borne in mind that adequate safeguards must be provided in the interests of the consumer. Because eggs that were formerly sold on the market-place were not labelled at all. They may have been hen eggs, they may have been duck eggs, they may have been pigeon eggs, they even may have been nest-eggs. They were not graded, and you could not tell the quality until it was too late. I do not think I am exaggerating at all in making that statement. Now the proposition is to take a retrograde step and revert to the condition of affairs that prevailed ten or fifteen years ago when we are trying, in this progressive age, to build up a good market for the farmer and to insure that the eggs sold to the public shall be eggs of good quality.

Mr. EULER: Does the minister see any objection to accepting the suggestion of the hon. member for Macleod—

Mr. MOTHERWELL: Delighted.

Mr. EULER—that provision be made for the grading of eggs but that it be not compulsory and that eggs may be sold as ungraded?

Mr. MOTHERWELL: I thought my hon. friend was in favour of referring the whole matter again to the agricultural committee—

Mr. EULER: That is right.

Mr. MOTHERWELL:—where everybody would have a chance to give evidence on this very important question, including the hon. member for South Wellington, because in this important matter we should not take a sudden plunge. Every precaution was taken, in devising these regulations, not to worry the producer unduly. It was

4 p.m. recognized that he had trouble enough without having to worry too much over the marketing of his eggs, and the idea was to make regulations with which he could comply without being unduly harassed, and at the same time try to raise the standard of the trade in the interest of the consumer and everybody else. Now section 10 of the regulation reads as follows:

All persons who receive eggs on consignment or buy eggs for resale, in making payment for same, shall apportion the returns on the basis of at least two of the grades specified in these regulations—