

cil of the county of Hochelaga, a portion of which I will read :

(Translation.) Whereas, it is impossible for farmers, even when using the imperial measure, to obtain a weight of 90 pounds for a bag of potatoes ; and, whereas, it is in the interest of the farming community in general, and of the farmers of the county of Hochelaga in particular, that the weight of a bag of potatoes should be reduced to 80 pounds.

This Council begs both Houses of Parliament to grant the petition of the honourable member for Laval, Mr. Fortin, and to reduce to 80 pounds the regulation weight of each bag of potatoes.

I have here similar resolutions from a number of municipal councils. It is unnecessary to read them all, but they are all to the same effect, if not all in the same language. I have a resolution adopted by the municipal council of Rivière des Prairies on March 29th last ; a similar resolution passed by the municipal council of St. Dorothée on the 28th March ; another by the parish of St. François de Sales on the 29th March ; another by the parish of St. Léonard, Port Maurice, on the 25th March ; another by the municipal council of St. Martin on the 26th March ; a similar resolution passed by the municipal council of the parish of St. Constant, county of Laprairie, on the 26th March ; a similar resolution adopted by the municipal council of the village of St. Rose on the 24th March ; and another by the parish of Ste. Rose on the 25th March.

Mr. BERGERON. Where is Ste. Rose ?

Mr. FORTIN. My hon. friend surely knows where Ste. Rose is, for if I remember well he was in Ste. Rose some time in 1886, working for the National party, so-called at that time, and against his friends on the opposite side of the House.

Mr. BERGERON. That probably explains the appearance of the hon. gentleman here to-day.

Mr. FORTIN. I do not think it is due to that influence, but I am willing to allow my hon. friend the pleasure of remaining under that impression.

I beg to quote also a letter that I have received from the Chambre de Commerce, of Montreal, in which this measure is also endorsed. The secretary says :

(Translation.) I understand that you are introducing a Bill to the effect of determining the standard of the potato bag, when potatoes are offered for sale in bags.

Allow me to tell you that such a Bill is necessary, as the practice of selling potatoes by the bag prevails throughout the country.

The standard which your Bill proposes to fix seems to meet with general approbation, as well among the farming community as among the merchants, because everybody complains of the by-law of the city which requires that each bag should weigh 90 pounds, a quantity which ordinary bags cannot be made to contain.

Now, Mr. Chairman, I think these will answer the objection which was made on a previous occasion, that such legislation was

Mr. FORTIN.

not needed, and had not been called for. I could, without any trouble, have obtained scores of resolutions from other municipal bodies throughout the province of Quebec, to the same effect. Now, although I believe that the standard should be adopted for the whole Dominion, I have been told, and it has been declared before this House, that in some of the provinces it would be an inconvenience. I have been told that in the province of Ontario, for instance, where potatoes are exported to the United States by the bag, it would be an inconvenience to reduce the standard of the bag, because ninety pounds is the standard in the United States. Therefore, in view of this circumstance, I propose to add the words, "in the province of Quebec" in the beginning of the Bill, which I propose to be adopted as an amendment to clause 2 of the present Act. The effect of the amendment will be to make the standard applicable only to the province of Quebec. I think this will remove all the objections that were brought to this measure. It will probably be said that this is exceptional legislation, that it would be unwise to adopt a special standard for one province and that the law should be made applicable to all the provinces. Now, I may state that we have already in the Weights and Measures Act several provisions which are applicable only to the province of Quebec. We have a provision with respect to the measurement of land. The old measurement of the French system is still conserved in our statutes, and is applicable to the province of Quebec. The old measurement with respect to the bundle of hay or straw is also applicable in the province of Quebec. If there are already in the Weights and Measures Act exceptions, the insertion of an additional one would not make much difference. The Weights and Measures Act is by no means an ideal legislation. The whole system will have, one day or another, to be changed. We shall have to adopt the decimal or metric system, applicable to all kinds of measurements ; but until we have reached the time when such legislation should be passed and placed on the Statute-book, we may properly take cognizance of provincial exceptions, and there is no strong reason why the amendment I now propose should not be inserted in the present Bill. I move :

That clause 2 be amended so as to read as follows :—

"In the province of Quebec, when potatoes are sold by the bag, each bag must contain at least 80 pounds of potatoes."

Mr. QUINN. Is there at the present time any standard of measurement for potatoes?

Mr. FORTIN. There is the standard of a bushel, 60 pounds. This is provided for by section 16 of the present Act.

Mr. MACLEAN. Why make a change ?

Mr. FORTIN. We propose to adopt a standard for a bag, because there is no such