

Agricultural Stabilization Act

Mr. Gordon Ritchie (Dauphin): Mr. Speaker, I would like to support the hon. member for Red Deer (Mr. Towers). The addition of wool in motion No. 1 as an agricultural product should not be denied, and I notice that industrial milk and industrial cream have been separated. I presume that had only the word "milk" been used, that would have meant both industrial milk and industrial cream, but for purposes of clarification and making sure that both are covered, I presume this wording was used.

I think wool should be added because that would signify that wool would come under the legislation. Wool is very much a product of sheep. Leaving wool out would be the same as saying that cowhides would not enter into the calculation of the returns from a cattle beast on the basis that it was separate. Therefore I think wool is very much part of this bill, and to leave it out would mean that the bill would not cover wool. Surely if it is to cover sheep, it really signifies that it covers sheep only as meat, whereas wool should be considered part of the product of sheep. It just so happens that wool is a major part of the return on sheep production. Therefore I do not see any point in not allowing the word "wool".

The bill does include sheep, and I think a good argument could be made, in figuring and assessing the returns from sheep, that one has to consider the value of the wool. All this amendment does is clarify something which has already been implied, that is, that sheep will be covered, and that wool is part of the return from the raising of sheep.

Turning to motion No. 2, it reads in part that:

... the base price the cost of transportation of such agricultural commodity from representative producer shipping centres to representative markets averaged for the said five years."

I think this is a very good point. After all, the cost of shipping produce from the general area where it is produced to the general area where it is consumed is substantial, and it makes all the difference in the world. For instance it is argued that western beef producers are being unduly discriminated against by virtue of the high cost of transporting beef carcasses versus live cattle. I think this is a major factor to be taken into account.

The way the legislation presently reads, those who live close to a consuming centre will get quite a lot more out of this base price than those who live far away. Adding the cost of transportation to this base price would remove some of these inequities and make a more representative bill. It does not necessarily mean that the cost would be higher, because the cost of shipping commodities is representative of the cost—

Mr. Reid: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I would like to know if the hon. member is addressing himself to the substance of the bill and the motions, or whether he is dealing with the procedural aspects.

An hon. Member: That is not a point of order.

Mr. Ritchie: Mr. Speaker, this does not change the money involved and what the treasury would be responsible for. Deleting the word "five" and substituting the word "two" merely underlines the fact that some number has to be used. It could be one year, two years, five years, 10 or 20 years. None of those figures would imply that the

[Mr. Towers.]

treasury would be responsible for any more costs. To say that substituting the word "two" would cost more than "five" only assumes that inflation will continue, and therefore the average of five years will be less than the average of two years. It could well be the other way. I think motion No. 3 does not in any way imply that the cost to the treasury will be any greater. It may well be less. I suggest that any number could be used, five, ten or twenty, but in a practical way two years does not necessarily increase the cost to the treasury. It may reduce it, and I therefore suggest that it should be allowed so that we might debate it.

Mr. G. W. Baldwin (Peace River): Mr. Speaker, there are several reasons for urging that the amendments are in order. The first, of course, is that the parliamentary secretary has argued that they are out of order. That, by itself, is a major reason.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Baldwin: I can understand why the hon. member for Dauphin (Mr. Ritchie) might have wandered a little, because he had the greatest difficulty following the parliamentary secretary in his very tortuous point of order.

I would point out to the Chair the wording of this royal recommendation, and if one were to follow with precision the argument advanced by the parliamentary secretary I must say that this would place great inhibitions upon an opposition which has grave problems trying to put forward proposals to alter bad legislation to make it better and to improve some of the proposals of the government. The difficulties are, of course, in the rules. The royal recommendation in this particular instance says:

His Excellency the Governor General has recommended to the House of Commons the present measure to amend the Agricultural Stabilization Act to amend in the manner prescribed the definition "agricultural commodity"...

I would suggest that if the words "the manner prescribed" are to be given the fullest, strictest and harshest interpretation, which the parliamentary secretary urges for them, it would mean that the use of those words in any other bill before this House, with a royal recommendation attached, would make it impossible for the opposition, or any hon. member, to move an amendment. Some day there may be a member of the government party with enough courage to move an amendment. I look forward to that. Some day I will see rising out of those ranks of statues opposite—

Mrs. Campagnolo: Oh, Jed!

Mr. Baldwin:—an hon. man or an hon. woman who will say, "I don't like what the government is doing; I'm going to try to amend it". I look forward to that day. I hope it will happen when I am still in this House. I do not have much hope, but one can wish. I hear them making noises occasionally, but that is as far as they go.

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If I can get back to the point I was making, Mr. Speaker, that if these words "the manner prescribed" are to be given the very strict, harsh interpretation ascribed to them by the parliamentary secretary, it would be almost