

Agricultural Products Act

have the co-operation of all members in abiding by the rules, and I would ask that they make their remarks relevant to the motion.

Mr. Bentley: I assure you, sir I will do that. On the point of order, I agree that some of these remarks should have been made on the motion for second reading of the bill. When I offered to give up the place I had in the debate today in order to allow the bill to be presented, it did not appear that that suggestion would receive unanimous consent. As a result I had to take this opportunity of making the remarks I am making, because I had adjourned the debate last Friday. I have no desire whatever, sir, to do anything that you believe to be out of order. I should like to have the remarks I have made up to this point considered by the Minister of Agriculture.

In spite of what the minister may think about my remarks being beyond the bounds of this debate, I believe they are pertinent. I believe some of the things I have mentioned should be included in the bill when it comes before the house.

Speaking to the point of order, the minister said that there are other measures that will afford an opportunity of dealing with this matter. I agree that there is one other measure—I do not know what the two measures are—namely, Bill 82, on which I expect to speak. Perhaps coarse grains will be taken care of by that bill. Until that bill is dealt with we are dealing with this resolution to continue the operation of the Agricultural Products Act for another year. To summarize briefly, and not try your patience, sir, I will put it this way: Our group believes coarse grains should be marketed through the wheat board. Failing that, we believe that a natural products marketing act should be set up by this government to deal with agricultural products.

Although there are some things in the resolution that are obnoxious, we are certainly not going to oppose it. But we want to impress upon the minister the fact that it is not our idea of good legislation to go on from year to year extending it for another year, instead of doing what could have been done over a year ago, and could have been done here—introducing a natural products marketing act which would encompass all the products now being dealt with under the Agricultural Products Act. I hope the minister will keep this point in mind when the bill comes before us. Certainly, if it is not there, I and others in this group will have a good deal to say about it. I shall not weary the house any further at this stage.

[Mr. Speaker.]

Mr. George A. Drew (Leader of the Opposition): The principle involved in the motion that is before the house, Mr. Speaker, has to do with a subject which has already been under discussion here and which cannot be divorced from the consideration of this proposal. It is easy for members to talk lightly of the constitution and the relationship of this resolution to a correct interpretation of our constitution. But that is the way in which governments lead to the breakdown of their parliamentary system. If there is not recognition and observance of the limitation of the constitution, sooner or later the constitution becomes ineffective as an instrument to protect the freedom of the people.

The resolution declares that it is expedient that an amendment be introduced to extend the Agricultural Products Act for another year. The very form of the resolution imposes upon the members of the house the obligation to decide whether they believe there is an emergency which justifies the extension of this measure, or whether, on the other hand, there should be a bill introduced which would have regard to the ordinary constitutional rights of this parliament.

In order to understand what it is that the members of this house are being asked to declare to be expedient at this time, let us go back to the preamble of the bill of 1947. It says:

Whereas His Majesty's dominions and foreign countries, during and as the result of the war against Germany and Japan, were and still remain in grave distress for want of adequate food supplies; and whereas for the more efficient prosecution of the war and in order to assist in the relief of suffering and the distribution of food supplies the government of Canada entered into agreements for the sale or export of food supplies to other governments or agencies thereof, which agreements still continue in force; and whereas certain orders and regulations were made by the governor in council under the authority of the War Measures Act and the National Emergency Transitional Powers Act, 1945, for the purpose of enabling Canada to carry out the said agreements; and whereas the said orders and regulations will expire on the thirty-first day of March, 1947, and it is necessary by reason of the existing national emergency that parliament confer authority to enable the government of Canada to fulfil its obligations under the said agreements and to continue to sell and export food supplies to distressed countries for the relief of suffering and the distribution of essential food supplies, in order to maintain economic stability and to ensure an orderly transition from war to peace: Therefore His Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate and the House of Commons of Canada, enacts as follows:

And the provisions of the act follow. The question before the house is not the desirability of having legislation to make it possible to fulfil present contracts for food supplies. The question is whether this matter should still be dealt with on the basis that there is