

Hon. DUNCAN McL. MARSHALL: Honourable members, with consent of the House I would move second reading of this Bill now. I will announce at once that I intend, as soon as second reading is given, to move that the measure be referred to the Committee on Agriculture, which I think is the proper committee to deal with this.

Perhaps I should make a few observations before the motion for second reading is put. A good deal of difficulty has been experienced in connection with the operation of stockyards and the marketing of live stock, and certain parties have been blamed for all the troubles. Up to the present time the stockyards have been controlled to some extent by the live stock exchanges. As there are some eleven stockyards in Canada and only six of them have live stock exchanges organized, the other five are more or less directed by officials of the Department of Agriculture. Under this Bill a committee of persons familiar with and interested in the marketing of live stock would be formed—I think the Minister said in another place the committee would have seven or nine members—to settle these troublesome things, such as have been arising over a period of years. For instance, condemnation insurance is as large an item to the farmers now as it was before we began testing for tuberculosis all over the country, but the great bulk of live stock marketed in Western Canada come off ranges where only a small proportion are subject to tuberculosis. It is felt there should be some revision of this insurance, and we believe the revision can best be made by a group of men appointed in the manner contemplated by the Bill.

Then there is the provision for fining a farmer who brings to the stockyard a beast with horns on. The fine is one dollar. And the buyers did one of the cleverest things that I ever knew them to do: they not only made the rule requiring this fine, but they put the fines into their own pockets. The premier of one province told them they could not do that any longer, and he had the fines diverted to the provincial treasury. So far he has got away with that. We believe there should be uniform regulation of this matter, applicable to stockyards throughout the country.

There recently was some trouble in a stockyard where the live stock exchange was composed of a large number of members, most of whom were small buyers. These small buyers got the idea that it was a bad thing to allow their fellow members to telephone out to farmers and dealers in the country about the market. They did not feel like

paying the telephone charges to give this service themselves, and they believed they were handicapped by their fellows who were giving it; so they actually passed a regulation, which they wanted the Department of Agriculture to approve of, to the effect that no member of the exchange should be allowed to telephone such information at his own expense; that if a farmer wanted to know the condition of the market he should telephone himself, and pay for the call. That ridiculous regulation did not go into effect, but it is one of many things that have been cropping up and causing considerable dissatisfaction with respect to the marketing of live stock.

Also, no plan has yet been evolved for the grading of cattle in stockyards. A committee of the kind contemplated by this Bill may develop some plan that will assist farmers who have live stock to market to get better prices, if possible, and be subjected to smaller charges. A few years ago an Order in Council was passed approving of a reduction of stockyard fees, which the Department of Agriculture has the right to regulate. In spite of that, the fees were never reduced and the business went on as before, largely because there was no group of men actively interested in the producing and marketing of cattle to put up something of a fight for their side of the case. I believe this measure will lead to the appointment of a committee which will evolve a set of rules and regulations that should improve the operation of stockyards throughout Canada.

Hon. HENRY A. MULLINS: Honourable senators, I have before me the Act which was passed some years ago for the regulation of stockyards, and the present Bill. I notice that in his remarks on the present measure the honourable gentleman from Peel (Hon. Mr. Marshall) kept away from all reference to the packers. There is a clause here providing that live stock may be sent into a packer's yard, and that used as a stockyard. Why did the honourable member not mention that? Does he agree with the practice of shipping live stock by truck into a yard attached to the packer's abattoir, where the price is fixed by the packer? I cannot understand his evading that point. The proposed clause will be a detriment to the live stock trade and a menace to the producer in the country. Live stock will accumulate in the packers' yards, to the serious disadvantage of the producer. For instance, if a buyer in Montreal wants a certain number of cattle, he cannot wire to his agent in Toronto to make the necessary purchase, because naturally the packer has control of his yard. Nothing like