

It was mentioned that the plants were involved in the hiring of inspectors. I would suggest that that is not correct. Federal inspectors are hired by the federal Government, and therefore they come under the jurisdiction of the federal Government.

The allegation that this Bill was introduced simply to facilitate the implementation of cost recovery in inspection services is erroneous. The Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Wise) has had that authority all along and this Bill will not change that authority.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for allowing me the opportunity to set the record straight. I look forward to questions from the Opposition on the points which I have raised.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Charest): Are there questions or comments?

Mr. Althouse: Mr. Speaker, quite rightly the Hon. Member pointed out that we have a good inspection service in Canada which is recognized world-wide. We are prone to say that we have the best, but in some cases we still must take second place to the United States. The United States does not always recognize our standards as being equal to their standards. The United States sends their inspectors to Canada, and occasionally they have been known to turn down some of the plants with standards which we considered adequate for the export of meats. In some cases the United States considered the standards to be inadequate and our plants had to change their standards to suit the Americans in order to continue with the shipments. While our standards may be the highest in the world, they are not always perceived to be so by some of our major customers.

The Member pointed out that the system was in place and that there were no changes proposed in this legislation. I must return to my previous question: If there are no changes proposed in this legislation, and as the legislation has existed for 70 or 80 years and is well understood by everyone involved, why is the Government introducing it?

Mr. Fraleigh: Mr. Speaker, for the benefit of the Hon. Member for Humboldt-Lake Centre (Mr. Althouse), I will tell him that I did not indicate that there were no changes in the Bill. There are changes in the Bill. Those changes mainly deal with streamlining the legislation and addressing the sections which pertain to the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. He also indicated that the Americans do not necessarily accept our inspection system and that they send their own inspectors. I agree with him. That is absolutely correct. However, we also send our inspectors to their meat plants. It is a reciprocal agreement which allows the plants to ship products back and forth across the border with limited interference.

Mr. Boudria: Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member for Lambton-Middlesex (Mr. Fraleigh) said in his preamble that he would set the record straight and correct those who had cast aspersions on the meat inspection system. As I remember from the debate which took place, the Parliamentary Secretary began his remarks by indicating that Canada has the greatest meat inspection system in the world. I said the same thing, and if I

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remember correctly, the Hon. Member for Humboldt-Lake Centre (Mr. Althouse) also began his remarks in a similar manner. I am wondering, was the Hon. Member referring to debates which happened in this House or elsewhere?

● (1250)

Mr. Fraleigh: Mr. Speaker, I would have to agree with the Hon. Member that he did start his preamble by saying that we had one of the best systems in the world, but he then started to cast doubts about certain Sections within the Act.

Mr. Boudria: What has that got to do with it?

Mr. Fraleigh: It has a lot to do with it.

Mr. Boudria: Mr. Speaker, I just want to add very briefly that recognizing we have a good system does not mean that I approve of everything the Government does. For this Government to think that it is always on the side of righteousness and that anyone who even questions its legislation is somehow on the wrong side of the fence just goes to explain to you, Mr. Speaker, that very arrogant attitude which is developing in the minds of Hon. Members of this Government. After only a few months in office, the attitude that we in this House cannot even stand up and question sections of this Bill because if we question this Bill we must have something against the agricultural industry is preposterous, and the Hon. Member for Lambton-Middlesex (Mr. Fraleigh), who knows a lot more about agriculture than most Hon. Members of this House, should know better. He should not make ridiculous statements like that.

Mr. Fraleigh: Mr. Speaker, I look forward to this Bill being referred to committee and the Hon. Member coming to committee on a regular basis to debate it. The only times I have seen him show up at meetings of the agricultural committee have been when he simply wanted to score political marks rather than be constructive. I look forward to seeing him participate in the debate in committee.

Mr. Boudria: You show up too.

Mr. Fraleigh: I will be there.

Hon. Charles Mayer (Minister of State (Canadian Wheat Board)): Mr. Speaker, there have been some very valid questions raised with regard to some of the sections in the Bill which I will attempt to answer, hopefully, to the satisfaction of Hon. Members opposite. If I have any time left I will make a few general comments on the Bill.

First, the Hon. Member for Glengarry-Prescott-Russell (Mr. Boudria) raised a couple of good questions. One question had to do with Section 20(b) of the Bill which proposes to separate the registration and licensing of a meat packing establishment. Our concern is that presently an establishment is licensed and if there is a problem associated with the continuation of that facility, the Government has no choice but to simply delicense the operation and it ceases to function. What is proposed in this Bill is to register an operator and