

In this connection there arises the question raised the other day by the hon. member for York-Sunbury with regard to the fisheries board, which applies as well to this board. The question was as to what kind of representation was going to be given the producers in connection with a set-up of this kind. The bill provides for the appointment not only of a board of three but of commodity boards. If the government in its wisdom decides that we are going to have floor prices under dairy products, for example, it would be possible under this bill to appoint a dairy board, just as we have a dairy board to-day, to handle those particular products. If we were going to set floors or certain prices under meat products, then we may have a meat board, as we have a meat board to-day. In connection with these commodity boards there would be an opportunity for regional representation, producer representation and perhaps representation of the business concerns handling the particular product. I suggest that it would be difficult to have the board which is to administer the act sufficiently large in membership to take care of all those who probably should be represented.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): The minister is suggesting that it would be too large or unwieldy.

Mr. GARDINER: And too expensive.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): That same argument does not apply to the fisheries board.

Mr. GARDINER: That is a matter which the Minister of Fisheries (Mr. Bertrand) can discuss.

In addition the bill provides for an advisory committee. I stated on a previous occasion that when appointing an advisory committee to the food board we had left to the agricultural producers or the Canadian farm federation the question whether they would prefer to have one member on a board of three or five or six, or be adequately represented on an advisory committee. After some discussion with their own organizations the president reported to me that they preferred to be represented on the advisory committee. We proceeded to appoint the president of the federation as chairman of the advisory committee, and I referred to the fact the other day that this committee was to meet, as it did during the last two days. We appointed two other representatives who were nominated directly by the federation, and then other members of the federation were selected by provincial governments across Canada. I think it is generally considered that they have adequate representation on this advisory

committee of twelve. This bill makes provision for the setting up of an advisory committee of that kind. I think it is possible to have the kind of representation which would be most helpful to the producers on a committee of that kind as well as on some of the commodity boards.

There is an obvious reason—this is one which I suggest myself, and it may not be the reason the federation would suggest—for selecting an advisory committee rather than a permanent administration board to provide representation for the producers. The best reason I can think of is this—and it is sometimes stated by members of the house. When a producer has been on a board or in the department for two or three years he ceases to represent the producers. If you were going to try to satisfy the producers that they are represented on a board of that kind at all times you might be required to change the membership so often that probably it would not function very efficiently.

In addition I do not believe that anyone who is in the pay of the government drawing a salary from the government, is nearly as free to criticize the government as the man who is not paid a salary by the government, and so I believe that the producers are in a much stronger position when they have adequate representation on an advisory committee, where they can give their advice to the government through the minister or through the board, and where the minister or head of the board can sit in with them and give the views of the government with regard to the matter under consideration. While these matters are discussed in a committee which meets behind closed doors, and the advice is given just as the advice of officials is given to the government, yet these men are free to go back and advise their own people and give them the reasons why certain things are not being or are being done, and their own organizations are perfectly free to criticize the government for anything which the government has decided to do after considering the advice given to them by the committee. In other words, we do not always follow the advice that is given by the committee, and we seldom follow their advice one hundred per cent. Sometimes, too, before the committee give their advice they call in the minister or a board to ask them to state why a certain thing has not been done, and in many cases after all the facts have been placed before them they agree that what was proposed is the proper thing to do. In other cases, we agree to disagree on occasions and go on with the task, believing that the responsibility in matters of policy rests with the government and that they must take that responsibility. I believe that a system of that kind