

*Supply—Egg Grading*

These regulations, I think, were prepared for the purpose of mixing up both the producer and the vendor of eggs on the local market. I realize this, that for the purposes of the wholesale trade this grading is necessary, and is proper. I realize that for the purposes of the export and import of eggs, this grading system is a proper system; but I think it is going entirely too far when you ask the farmer on his local market to have his eggs graded under these regulations, and to pay two cents a dozen for the privilege of having it done. Now what is the actual experience? On Saturday after Saturday on the markets of western Ontario you will find a long line of farmers—it is not so bad in summer, but in cold weather it is very annoying, very troublesome, and inconvenient—standing in line for half or three-quarters of an hour, and it has been reported to me, in some cases, for over an hour, waiting for the privilege of passing a basket of eggs through to a grader, and paying two cents a dozen to have those eggs graded, and graded by a man who in the majority of cases knows nothing or little about the grading of eggs. Why, in the Guelph market they have tested these graders out. The wives of farmers, reputable women, have come to me and said that they have put the same basket through before three different graders, and in each instance they have obtained different grades. I have made inquiries of the ordinary consumers, citizens in my city, and I have failed to find one who is in favour of this system. It was reported to me that the local merchants were in favour of the system. I called up six of them on the telephone and inquired, and the whole six said: No, abolish the system. I have seen many, many farmers and many, many farmers' wives, and I find they are all agreed; they are all opposed to this system of egg grading on the local markets.

Why was the system ever put on, one may ask? It was as a result of the demand of the wholesale dealers. It helps them, I will grant you. They get a certain amount of immunity from it, but for the purchaser in the open market it is no protection, and for the farmer it is an inconvenience, an injustice, and an expense. That two cents a dozen that the farmer has to pay he never gets back. They say he adds it to the price, but the price of eggs to-day is lower than when the grading system was introduced. The farmer has not gained. I do not object to the man who goes through a township buying eggs and bringing them into some kind of a central warehouse, being compelled to grade his eggs but I do object, and the farmers

[Mr. Guthrie.]

object, to farmers' wives being obliged to submit to this imposition on the local market, with the cost that it entails.

Why maintain such a system? I have had a good many communications on the subject from a good many places in the province of Ontario. I am sorry my hon. friend from North Waterloo (Mr. Euler) is not in his place, because I know he is interested in this matter. He took it up with the Department of Agriculture and announced in a paper with which he is connected that the egg grading system did not apply to the local farmer on the local market. We thought for a while that we were going to be relieved, but it turned out that it does apply, and I am sorry to say that in the constituency I have the honour to represent there have been two prosecutions and two fines imposed on farmers who did not stand in line and have their little basket graded, paid for, and labelled by an inefficient egg grader.

Who appoints the egg graders, I do not know. I wonder if they are appointed by the Civil Service Commission? The reason I ask the question is this: I received a notice the other day that the Civil Service Commission was going to appoint a wool grader. Therefore, I assume that the egg graders are appointed in the same way. Well, in that case, all I can do is to ask the Civil Service Commission to go through western Ontario and take a good look over their egg graders there, because I am not satisfied that they are competent men for the work entrusted to them.

I submit, Mr. Speaker, that the whole system is wrong. Surely we can continue the open market system. If you are going to grade eggs, why not grade other produce? Why not grade butter, fruit, potatoes and other vegetables that are brought on the market? Why compel the farmers to undergo this grading system only in regard to their eggs? I say, Mr. Speaker, that it is an imposition upon the farmers of this country, and more particularly it is an imposition on the wives of the farmers. No injustice has been done in the past under the old system. Both purchaser and vendor have been satisfied with the old open market system, where the good old doctrine of "Caveat emptor"—let the buyer beware—prevailed. Under that system the purchaser got the eggs he bargained for, and the vendor was satisfied with the manner in which his eggs were sold. But these regulations are carrying this paternal idea in government to an excess.

I have brought this matter up in the way I have, and under the resolution which has been read to the House, in order that the