

*Farm Prices*

Mr. GARDINER: The board does not get any power to issue participation certificates.

Mr. DIEFENBAKER: Under the wheat board act is there not provision for participation certificates right in the estate?

Mr. GARDINER: Yes.

Mr. CRERAR: That is a wholly different principle.

Mr. DIEFENBAKER: Under this bill as at present constituted, any board, the marketing board or any other, which is empowered to operate the act, will have the power to issue participation certificates. If that is the stand taken by the minister, well and good. When I raised the point the other day it was with a view to assuring the farmer of the largest possible share of the ultimate price. If it is intended, as section 10 (3) provides, for a fund to be set up known as the agricultural prices support account, into which all moneys will go from all commodities as they are disposed of, certainly there could be no power of issuing anything in the nature of participation. Would the minister consider adding the suggestion made by the hon. member for Qu'Appelle? He could add to section 9 a provision empowering the board to make regulations. If that is not done, by the time the board commences to operate, the power will have gone for any such provision to be initiated by way of order in council. If the minister is serious in his view that it might be possible in so far as certain commodities are concerned that participation should or might be provided for, then I suggest to him that he grant that power now to the board to be used in its discretion. I can understand that if it were made generally applicable to all commodities it would not work out.

The minister has referred to the situation in Ontario as to the power of the wheat board to buy wheat in the province. If I understood him aright he said that one farmer alone had delivered to the board. Naturally no one wishes to build up machinery to cover contingencies such as that. Take any other major product where the deliveries necessarily will be large provided this legislation is to operate as we hope it will. I think provision should be made now for the board either to grant to the agency or to retain the power within its discretion to issue participation certificates. I think that is the most important matter and one which cannot be covered subsequently. We may find ourselves in this position. The war is over and these measures set up under the War Measures Act inoperative after six months. We may find that participation certificates cannot be provided for.

[Mr. Diefenbaker.]

Therefore I again suggest to the minister the necessity for that power being contained in section 9.

Mr. WRIGHT: I agree with the hon. member for Lake Centre with respect to this matter. The minister stated that it would be possible under this act to appoint the wheat board as the commodity board to handle coarse grains. I would point out that if that were done it would stop immediately the wheat board having the authority to issue participation certificates so far as coarse grains are concerned. They have that authority now, but once you appoint them as the commodity board under this act you would automatically put an end to that authority. I agree with the minister that we do not want participation certificates issued on every product which may come under the act, but I do think that certain products may come under the act on which the government may wish at times to issue participation certificates. Provision should be made somewhere in the act to cover that.

I would agree with the amendment suggested by the hon. member for Qu'Appelle if it contained a provision whereby the authority could be given to any particular commodity board, not necessarily to all, but to any the government wished, to issue participation certificates. We should have authority somewhere in the act for the government to do that. I do not see it in the bill at the present time. In fact it is impossible for them to do it under the present bill. The suggestion of the hon. member for Lake Centre to add another paragraph to section 9 to give the board that authority would meet the desires of hon. members in that regard.

Mr. GARDINER: This bill, of course, is not intended to be a marketing act in the sense that it undertakes to market all farm products at the highest possible price. This is what it says: We undertake to see that the farmer does not require to sell his product at an unduly low price. In order to avoid that, the government is prepared to take the product at a set price. Any of the cooperative organizations set up under the cooperative act of 1939, which handle now practically all the honey of western Canada, and the alfalfa which comes from the north country of Saskatchewan, and which have separate organizations now and make advance payments—any of them could with some justification—if the government sets a floor price under these products—claim that they were taking no risks whatsoever in paying that out as an advance payment and could go ahead and pay on that basis. If they make