

Canadian Livestock Feed Board

Mr. A. B. Patterson (Fraser Valley): Mr. Speaker, I wish to take part briefly in the discussion on Bill C-218, an act to provide assistance to livestock feeders in eastern Canada and British Columbia.

This is a subject which has exercised the minds of those interested in agriculture for a long time. Thinking back across the years I can remember some of the debates which took place in the House regarding feed grain assistance and freight rate assistance. The problems which were faced then by the various segments of agriculture both in eastern and western Canada have not changed very greatly. The matters which were raised then are still of vital importance today and some of the arguments and representations being made at the present time are similar to those made years ago.

In this connection I have been checking the various manuscripts and briefs we have received in the past with reference to the establishment of a feed grain agency. I have before me a brief presented by the Federation of Agriculture dealing in considerable detail with the proposal to set up a feed grain agency and making a number of recommendations as to how it should be established and what its duties and responsibilities should be. I also have here a brief presented by the National Farmers Union to the government of Canada in which that organization also lays stress upon the necessity and importance of an agency such as is contemplated in the bill before us. In addition, I have a copy of the report of the standing committee on agriculture and colonization relating to the price of feed grain. On page 6 of this document we find this recommendation:

Your committee recommends the establishment of an agency, board or commission, hereinafter called "the agency", to be known as the Canadian Federal Grain Agency or by such other name as may be determined by parliament.

As I have indicated, there has for many years been a recognition of the need to see that prices both in eastern and western Canada should be fixed at reasonable rates and that feeders should be assured of adequate supplies of feed grain. When speaking on this subject some years ago I referred to the fact that in British Columbia feeders were required to pay almost four times the price at which feed grain was being moved in our sister province of Alberta. In Alberta, of course, grain can be moved from one farm to another without having to go through the Wheat Board and adhere to other regulations.

[Mr. Hees.]

The price in Alberta was about \$20 a ton while in British Columbia it was approximately \$70 a ton. I do not know what the present prices are.

An ironical aspect of the situation was that our people were forced to try to compete with products raised in Alberta and imported into British Columbia. This illustrates the impossible position in which growers in British Columbia were placed. So the whole question of feed grain prices was urgent then and is still a matter of urgency today.

The bill before us proposes to establish an agency to deal with such matters. I shall not go into the subject in detail today but I suggest that the task to be committed to this agency will not be an easy one to discharge. Sometimes we have taken the position that if and when an agency such as this is set up all our problems will be taken care of and it will be an easy matter to iron out the difficulties and remedy the inequities. But the proposed agency will not have an easy task before it. Too many difficulties are likely to arise in the administration of the program and in satisfying the legitimate interests of various regions. I agree with those who have suggested that in view of the wide powers to be conferred on this agency a tremendous responsibility rests upon its members to discharge their duties in a fair, equitable and satisfactory manner.

The duties are outlined in the bill. One of the most important aspects of this legislation is that a continuing study is to be made. With the passing of time circumstances may change. New problems may arise and some of the old ones may be solved. This subject will require continuing attention on the part of the agency so as to see to it that its responsibilities are discharged in a proper manner.

• (1:30 p.m.)

A great deal depends on the composition of the board, the persons who are to be appointed and their attitudes to the various problems. We also note the fact that an advisory committee is to be set up. In that connection I think I should refer to the suggestion made by the Canadian Federation of Agriculture because this is one aspect that must receive careful consideration. At page 13 of the brief presented by the federation on February 23, 1965, it is stated:

Finally it is of the utmost importance that this agency which will be a state institution shall have advisory to it a committee composed of persons who are formally representative of organized farm groups in eastern Canada and British Columbia. Provision for effective consultation with and advice from producers is essential.