

Canadian Livestock Feed Board

clause before us contains a subclause which states:

3. The advisory committee shall meet at least once a year at the headquarters of the board, and at such other times and places as it deems necessary in order to carry out its duties under this act.

Further on, subclause 6 reads as follows:

6. It shall be the duty of the advisory committee (a) to study and review all matters relating to feed grain transportation, storage, prices and consumption that are referred to it either by the minister or by the board;

My question to the minister is whether it should be our understanding that the only matters that properly can be taken up by the advisory committee at its regular annual meeting or at the other meetings which undoubtedly will take place between the annual meetings will be those referred to in clause 15 (6) of the bill?

Mr. Sauv : Mr. Chairman, that is the minimum they will have to do. They have an obligation to do at least that and, as I said on Friday, this committee will be established on the same basis as the Canadian council on rural development. It will have about the same power to examine and make reports and recommendations and to give advice not only on problems which are referred to the committee by the board but on all other matters because subclause 6 of clause 15 establishes the minimum duties of the board. There is a compulsion for the committee to do that much at least, so I do not see what the hon. member for Prince is driving at in his argument. This committee has all the necessary powers the hon. member is proposing today or was proposing on Friday. I think we could adopt this clause as it stands now.

● (4:20 p.m.)

Mr. Kindt: This is an advisory committee. There is a duplication inherent in what the minister has said. The advisory committee is to undertake studies and the board also is to undertake studies. There is going to be a duplication of staff making these two types of studies. Why saddle the taxpayers with this additional cost of bureaucracy? If the advisory committee desires certain information, why could it not draw upon the staff of the board and the information compiled by it rather than have a duplication? The advisory committee, if it is going to make all these studies, will have to have a staff of 10, 15 or 20 people digging into particular items. The board itself will have to have a similar number of people digging into these items.

It seems stupid, and it is stupid, to pass legislation requiring this type of duplication and waste of the taxpayers' money. We are setting up something for the board itself and the minister to hide behind rather than assuming their responsibility. This parliament wants the board and the minister to take the responsibility, and not have the minister rise in his place at some later date and say it was the advisory committee that was responsible for something. The committee can be used as a red herring to draw across mistakes, actions and decisions that are rightfully those of the minister and the board.

Mr. Sauv : May I ask if the hon. member for Macleod has come to an agreement with the hon. member for Prince about the advisory committee? I am lost because they have two different positions.

Mr. Douglas: There is no doubt in my mind about the value of having an advisory committee. The board becomes an administrative body and there must be some channel through which the producers and others who are affected by the program envisaged in this legislation can have access to the board to present their views so that the committee can make the various studies required and forward its recommendations to the board or to the minister. I think that an advisory committee to this board will fill much the same functions as the advisory committee to the wheat board, which is a very useful avenue of consultation. It provides a two-way street for the exchange of views and it provides the persons who are concerned, in the case of the wheat board, the producers, and in the case of this legislation, the feeders, with machinery whereby they can from time to time place their views before the board.

However, if this board is to be effective it seems to me there are two things that are giving hon. members some concern. I mention them only briefly. The first is the composition of the committee. I do not know whether the minister wants to write it into the legislation—it would be satisfactory to me if we had the minister's assurance on the record—that the persons selected for the advisory committee will be taken from a list of individuals nominated by farm organizations. I have had some experience with watching people being appointed to boards and advisory committees. It is often said that the person in question is selected from a farm organization. It is a very different thing to have someone selected