

Agricultural Products Act

of that year not a word was said about the situation which was developing. So much was that the case that a prominent United States magazine, which I quoted at the time, said Canada had become in an economic way the forty-ninth state of the union.

If, as the Minister of Justice has said, questions such as these are neither executive nor legislative matters but rather for the courts to determine, then by a majority vote in this house we should decide what this bill is, and have it declared valid. If we did that, however, some court would come along and declare it *ultra vires*. The minister used some language which I do not think was very appropriate, when he said arguments against the legislation were childish, kindergarten nonsense, and so on. He should not forget the Manitoba case of 1896, in which the privy council decided that under section 91, the same section to which the minister was referring the other night, the dominion had power to declare within a year and a day that any act of a provincial legislature should be disallowed. That was declared to be the function of the federal parliament; following that there was an election, and Sir Wilfrid Laurier came into office.

In conclusion may I say that I believe a better day is dawning for marketing in this country, and I also think the time has come when some constructive suggestions should be put forward instead of the opposition simply saying certain matters should be tested before the courts, and so on.

Mr. Ronald Moore (Churchill): Mr. Speaker, when the house rose the other evening we were engaged in a constitutional argument concerning this bill. When the hon. member for Kamloops (Mr. Fulton) spoke today he also dealt with the constitutional issue. The farmers of Canada, particularly those of western Canada, are not very much interested in the constitution as far as it applies to agricultural products marketing acts. The constitutional argument with respect to legislation such as this goes back to 1934. I well remember when the Conservative government of that day introduced an agricultural products marketing act and the Liberals, who were the official opposition, took very much the same stand against that legislation that the official opposition is taking today. I think it should be pointed out that the C.C.F. party at that time supported the bill before the house, just as they are supporting this legislation today.

In dealing with a constitutional issue I think we should always keep in mind that the people of Canada are much more interested in having the constitution of this

country serve our people than in having the people serve the constitution. A great deal of our agricultural development in the past ten or fifteen years has been due to the use of more and more machines. I can remember when western farmers turned to the combine from the old binder method of cutting their crops. How much progress would western farmers have made if the technicians designing farm machinery had simply stood around the first binder and said, "We cannot make any change in this design. We must not build such a thing as a combine"? Yet that is the attitude this house is taking toward changes in the constitution. I submit that such changes as may be required in the constitution to legalize agricultural products marketing legislation should be concurred in forthwith, as such changes are necessary to the welfare of agriculture. I intend to support this legislation.

When the Minister of Agriculture introduced this measure on February 11, he explained that it would be limited to those products for which we have contracts with Britain. The British people, and particularly the British government, are interested in the continuation of the contract method of obtaining their food products. I believe it is also true that the farmers of Canada are anxious that we continue this system of selling our products abroad. During the war a greater degree of stability was given to Canadian agriculture than at any other time in our history.

Under the contract method of selling agricultural products, the farmers are permitted to ascertain in advance how much of each product they should produce in one year and what price they can obtain for that product. By knowing those two things, the farmers know how much they can get for any one product in any one year. The farmers of Canada and the farm organizations are very anxious that we should have a renewal of the present contract, but they want the contract to be longer than the present one. If the contract is to be of much use to the farmers of Canada, if it is going to be of much use to the British government, it must extend over a period of four, five or six years.

The members of the house have noticed that during the past two months our exports to the British market have been gradually dropping. I shall not deal with the reasons for that situation because they have already been mentioned. I believe steps should be taken to secure as much of the British market as possible for the future delivery of our agricultural products. If steps of that nature are to be taken we must develop the method of contract marketing to a greater degree. It might also be possible to arrange barter