

Pesticide Residue Contamination

Under this bill all the burden is on the farmer; there is no burden whatsoever on the minister. The minister says he will pay compensation in respect of any product on which there is a residue of pesticide, subject to several conditions. The list of conditions that follows is both arms long. The minister has covered himself all round.

● (4:20 p.m.)

Mr. Olson: I do not think the hon. member has read Bill C-157 or he would not make assertions of that kind,

Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West): The minister has every opportunity to reply. I wish he would be advised by his legal officers. This is Bill C-155, not C-157. Why Bill C-157?

Mr. Olson: Because that is the pest control protection bill.

Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West): It is pesticide residue compensation I am talking about, Bill C-155.

An hon. Member: The minister is confused.

Mr. Olson: No, the minister is not confused. It is the member speaking who is confused.

Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West): The minister, by his intervention, is trying to confuse the issue. We are dealing with the pesticide residue compensation bill, and that is what I was talking about—pesticide residue. The minister has every opportunity to speak. He has been bobbing up and down in his place like a jack-in-the-box. I do not have the right of reply beyond this point and I wish to make my case.

The minister has made many interventions. Perhaps he has exhausted his right to speak—he did not rise on a point of order or seek to ask a question; he just stood up and made an assertion. Nevertheless, I have shown how in this year of 1969, with the government insisting we are moving into a just society, when we are seeking to enshrine a bill of human rights in the constitution, we are getting legislation of the type before us which from the point of view of a lawyer is wholly abhorrent. The minister or his advisors should read the proceedings of the annual meetings of the various law societies of the provinces or of the Canadian Bar Association. They would find that time and time again protests are

[Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West).]

made against excessive use of delegated powers this use of assessors or boards whose decisions are final and not subject to appeal.

I am not in the position to advance an amendment at this moment, but in my opinion this is terribly deficient legislation. In fact, I am prepared to vote against it on these grounds. It is a complete fraud because the burden is entirely on the farmer and the conditions imposed are all in favour of the minister. He has not taken a chance, not one chance, and the burden imposed on farmers is beyond all reason.

I hope, therefore, that further consideration will be given to this legislation. If the wording of some of these provisions cannot be amended by regulation we shall have to watch the situation most carefully because powers are granted here to inspectors which are not given to the police even for narcotic control. I suppose the minister will try to tell us that pesticide residues are worse than narcotics. The conditions imposed on farmers are almost impossible for them to fulfil. They will be the luckiest people in the world if they succeed against the department. This recalls the situation in some provinces where there is some kind of unsatisfied judgment fund. Motorists are told it is for their protection, but try recovering money from it. It is all right getting a judgment, but one almost has to take the province to court and fight the case all over again when it comes to collecting the amount awarded. As I say, I find this a most unsatisfactory piece of legislation from a legal point of view.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I notice the Minister of Agriculture is anxious to speak but I must advise him he does not have the right of reply on third reading. If it is the unanimous wish of the house he may be allowed to speak.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): I am willing to join in giving unanimous consent that the minister be heard, but I should like to speak, whether before or after the minister does not matter.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Would the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) like to speak now?

Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The generosity of the minister overwhelms me. Perhaps I may recall the stance which was taken with