

Agricultural Products Act

ascertained the facts and communicated them to this government. It should not have been left to the growers of British Columbia to pass a resolution informing this government that fire blight cannot be transmitted in boxed apples. I hope the minister will give consideration to this matter, so that when it is possible to export apples there will be no embargo against British Columbia apples entering Australia on this account.

Now I come to my concluding resolution, which I am rather proud to say was sponsored by a local of the British Columbia Fruit Growers Association in my district, an organization of which I happen to be a member. It was discussed thoroughly by some extremely capable people who have given a great deal of thought to this question; then it was forwarded to the annual convention, where it was adopted unanimously. I want to read the resolution and make a few brief comments in concluding my remarks:

Whereas the cessation of exports of apples to Great Britain is inflicting great hardship on many growers, especially those whose orchards are planted largely to export varieties, and

Whereas apart from the disastrous effect on the growers, it cannot be to the interest of the community to allow orchards to return to bushland, or to waste valuable food,

Therefore be it resolved by this 1949 B.C.F.G.A. convention that the executive of the B.C.F.G.A. be strongly urged to bring every pressure to bear on the Canadian government to purchase and export such fruit, accepting payment in sterling or British bonds, until such time as there is free exchange between dollars and sterling.

Some of our people also suggested that it would be a good idea for this government to purchase Canadian National Railways bonds, which are held in Great Britain, on this account.

I listened with a great deal of attention to the hon. member for Kamloops (Mr. Fulton) discuss this bill this afternoon. I distinctly remember the hon. gentleman saying that the bill was unconstitutional, unnecessary and undesirable. I was amazed to hear the representative of a fruit-growing riding in British Columbia make such a statement, in view of the attitude of the fruit growers of that province toward this legislation through the years, and in view of the fact that they have again endorsed this legislation by passing a resolution, which could not be given effect unless this legislation was adopted by this house. The fruit growers of British Columbia realize that anything done to implement this resolution would be as a result of this legislation being extended for a further period. Therefore I have no hesitation in repeating that I was very much surprised to hear the hon. member for Kamloops express such sentiments and opinions, opinions which obviously are in direct opposition to the wishes of the

[Mr. Herridge.]

fruit growers he represents, as this resolution can only be given effect under this act.

Again I do urge the minister to give consideration to the resolutions I have read. The fruit growers of the interior of British Columbia consider that if attention is given to these resolutions and something done to give effect to them, together with the legislation now before the house, something can be done towards improving the export market for British Columbia apples, and other fruits.

Right Hon. J. G. Gardiner (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Speaker: If the minister speaks now he will close the debate.

Mr. Gardiner: Following the remarks made by the hon. member who has just taken his seat, I would call attention to the fact that I think every farm organization which has been coming to Ottawa from year to year has been asking that these contracts with Great Britain be continued as long as it is possible to secure signatures to them. I do not think there has been any exception to that. Every farm organization coming here has suggested that their first choice would be a continuation of contracts such as those we have under this legislation, together with a continuation of the boards the government appointed to handle those products during the period of the war. But realizing that the constitution of this country, which has been under discussion at considerable length during this debate, does not permit, except under certain circumstances, of the government of Canada having boards which can be delegated the extent of authority these boards have had throughout the war period, they have suggested that, when the period comes to an end during which such contracts as these can be negotiated by boards such as we have now, there should be other appropriate legislation which would make it possible for the farmers to have boards set up under provincial legislation and complementary federal legislation. I wanted to make that statement in order to reply to some of the statements made by the official opposition this afternoon.

The statement was made over and over again that there is quite a difference between giving the authority which has been given to provincial boards set up under provincial marketing acts and the giving of authority to boards set up under the minister under this act. I submit, Mr. Speaker, that none of the provincial acts, and I think I have read all of them, have done anything except to give to the lieutenant governor in council the power to set up a board. It is not an