

Department of Agriculture to protect consumers with respect to grade standards in all types of agricultural produce?

This should also include the words "distributed to members of this house".

I shall have to make that a correction in *Hansard*. However, I am quite sure that the parliamentary secretary understood the intention behind my always pure motives. I asked this question as a result of a meeting of the Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development Committee. The minister was present at the meeting, and some of the officials were answering questions with respect to literature and information that was published by the Department of Agriculture for the information of consumers, dealing with the work of the department in connection with the establishment of grades for all types of agricultural produce, for instance, meat, beef, mutton, other meats, fruits, vegetables, honey and so on.

● (10:00 p.m.)

They also informed us of the inspection services undertaken by the Department of Agriculture to protect consumers across Canada, so far as possible with the staff available. I thought it was a very interesting and informative morning. It was for that reason that I asked the minister this question, but once again the Speaker failed to recognize the urgency and importance of the question, and I was referred to this late hour to discuss it. Anyway, I am quite glad to have the opportunity to speak for five, six or seven minutes instead of for one minute.

I mention this because I am quite sure there are many people in Canada who do not know of the services provided by the department, and of the literature and information that is available. In the first instance, I thought it would be a good idea for members of this house to understand this, because many members do not understand what is being done by the Department of Agriculture in this respect. This is why I ask whether the minister could distribute this pamphlet to the members of the house.

Naturally there is need for co-operation between the department and its officials, and consumers generally across the country. I am simply rising to bring this to the attention of the house and to suggest that a particular effort be made to send this literature not only to consumers organizations, which normally are found just in the larger centres—you do

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not find them in the smaller towns or villages—but also to farmers institutes, women's institutes, all sorts of agricultural organizations at the local level, chambers of commerce, trade unions, co-operatives and other community organizations of that type.

I believe it is important that more people know about this legislation and understand it. We must realize that the wife of a trade union member is just as interested in knowing what is being done in this respect as is the wife of a farmer, or of a member of a chamber of commerce, or of a member of some other organization. For that reason I rise to bring it to the attention of hon. members, and once again to urge that a particular effort be made to inform the consuming public of the services now available from the Department of Agriculture.

I know there is co-operation between consumers and officials of the department, but not to the extent that could be possible. I know of one instance where a man went down Elgin street in Ottawa and saw some apples on display in a store. They were obviously what we call in B.C. jumbo packed. It was a normal grade of apple, but not a fancy grade. However, these apples had been taken out of the box and put in small piles, with a card reading, "Extra fancy B.C. apples."

In this case the man knew something about grading apples and immediately got in touch with the Department of Agriculture. Within an hour and a half officials of the department went to the store and stopped this practice, which was an attempt to sell low grade apples at a high price. I am not going to say any more about this tonight, but I do feel that this is a service that can be improved, not only to the advantage of the department but to that of all whom it is intended to serve.

**Mr. B. S. Beer (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Agriculture):** Mr. Speaker, it is always a pleasure to have the opportunity of answering a question put by my fellow alumnus, the hon. member for Kootenay West (Mr. Herridge). I am particularly happy that he has brought this important question to the attention of the house at this particular time.

One of my earlier experiences and my first opportunity to see western Canada was in 1937 when I had the duty of looking after a Canadian Department of Agriculture exhibit, following the class A circuit in western