

Mr. Vic Althouse (Mackenzie): Mr. Speaker, I wish to draw to your attention what I believe to be irregularities in Bill C-54 which may require your intervention.

The government and the Official Opposition have been notified of my intention to raise a point of order on this bill, as has indeed your office.

The Standing Committee on Agriculture made six amendments to the bill and presented its report to the House on April 6, 1992.

Three of these amendments added new clauses to the bill each of which was ruled to be out of order. In two cases the chair ruled that the amendments sought to change the parent act and in the third he ruled that the clause went beyond the scope of the bill as passed in second reading.

The chair's rulings were overturned by a vote of the committee unanimously in the first two cases, but with dissent in the third.

My specific concern is with the third amendment which extends the application of the bill to farm products regulated under the Canadian Wheat Board Act. When this amendment was proposed in committee, the chair made the following ruling:

I've received advice similar to that which I've gotten on previous motions, that this is indeed out of order. It apparently introduces a new concept and assigns the responsibilities to the Governor in Council that go beyond the scope of the bill and beyond the scope of the clause to which it is amended.

The chair expressed some reservations about his own ruling but I think there can be no question that this amendment clearly goes beyond the scope of the bill that was referred to committee by this House.

Mr. Speaker, your intervention is required in this instance to preserve the careful and historic balance between the powers of the House and of committee and powers between government and opposition.

There are two courses of action available. The first would be to rule the committee's report irreceivable and have the committee submit a new report which is in order. While in many cases this might be the preferable option, I do not think that this course of action is necessary at this time.

Instead, I would respectfully request that, as Beuchesne recommends in paragraph 715 of the 6th edition, you order that the offending amendments made in

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committee be stripped from the bill before we proceed further with it.

Mr. Maurice Foster (Algoma): Mr. Speaker, I just want to comment because there are a number of points with regard to Bill C-54 where the government's approach seems to be to vote down every opposition amendment that comes forward even when the bill seems to be reducing the powers or placing in jeopardy the powers of established agencies like the Canadian Chicken Marketing Agency where an important amendment was proposed in a section in the bill.

At the same time, while they are putting in jeopardy some of those established agencies which are operating now in the country under a proclamation issued by the Governor in Council, they are bringing in amendments which are out of order, according to the chair of the Standing Committee on Agriculture. These things need to be taken into account. The motion before the House standing in my name, the first one on the Order Paper today, is very important, yet the government seems intransigent in that regard.

The three amendments which were put and which were ruled out of order by the chair include a new clause 9 on page 8 of the bill and a new clause 10 on page 8 of the bill. That one deals with the Canadian Wheat Board Act, as the member for Mackenzie has indicated.

• (1020)

Another difficulty with the bill is that the government has chosen not to reprint the bill so anybody in the House who did not attend the committee meetings would have great difficulty in determining exactly what is in the bill because the amendments which have been put and accepted, whether they were in order or out of order, are not in the reprinted bill. I think there needs to be some review of the decisions by the Chair, as the member for Mackenzie suggested in his intervention.

I would certainly hope when we get to the substance of the bill the government would consider my proposal with regard to Motion No. 1 standing in my name, and would by unanimous consent agree to having it re-put here at the House. I will put that proposal at a later date.

Mr. Ken Monteith (Elgin—Norfolk): Mr. Speaker, I would just like to make a couple of comments on Bill C-54, enabling legislation for check-offs for commodity groups across Canada, a bill that was requested by the commodity groups which appeared before the Standing Committee on Agriculture.